

***Equinoctial: an investigation of ‘the holographic’
for developing a new collection of ekphrastic
poetry.***

Pam Thompson



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Abstract

Holography is a form of 3D imaging. Its practice spans the disciplines of science and art. My original contribution to knowledge is in making a claim for holography as a new context for writing ekphrastic poetry which most usually refers to poetry written in dialogue with the visual. The scholarship of ekphrasis cites examples of poems written in response to painting, sculpture, photography and film but not to holography. This is practice-led research and my collection of poetry *Equinoctial* arising from it derives its structure, and the linguistic and formal properties of its poems, from a process of holographic enquiry arising from processes of holography and the properties of holograms. Furthermore, I construe this holographic enquiry as a form of ekphrastic enquiry. My primary sources for ekphrastic dialogues are the holopoetry and theories of holopoetry of Brazilian artist and poet, Eduardo Kac; the essay: 'Stopping Time: Harrison's Holograms', and holograms of John Harrison's timekeeper, 'H4' by Martin Richardson; the essays in *The Aerial Letter* and the novel, *Picture Theory* by French-Canadian writer, Nicole Brossard. For Brossard, the hologram is a trope associated with liberatory and visionary feminist reading and writing practices.

The scholarship of ekphrasis reveals its gendered nature which I go on to scrutinize via the various lenses of my primary sources. In order to consolidate my positioning as a feminist researcher, I develop the methodology, 'flâneuserie' from poetry and poetics by women poets and scholars which describes an agency-making approach to bringing together the creative and critical components of a practice-led thesis in creative writing in a poetics I come to describe as 'holopoetics'. I conclude by upholding holography as a technology of perception that emphasises the position of the viewer or reader in relation to artwork and poem, and, in doing so offers multiple perspectives and possibilities of interpretation. Throughout, I emphasise the significance of my study as an example of concept-driven practice-led research in creative-writing which upholds a claim for poetry as new knowledge.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated in memory of my friend, the late Dr Jayne Smith, whose persistence in completing her own PhD while terminally ill inspired me to continue with this one.

I also dedicate it also to the memory of my parents.

A big thank-you to Dr. Simon Perril and Dr. Kathleen Bell, my supervisors. Special thanks go to Simon for sharing his expertise in contemporary poetry and poetics; for his guidance generally, and for his generosity in lending me so many of his books.

Thank-you also to my advisor, Professor Martin Richardson, for his expertise; for the holograms, and for continuing to support and advise me, even though I didn't make any holograms in the end. One day!

It is also dedicated to my family and to my friends.

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that the thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another university. The thesis has been formatted using Chicago Style footnotes and bibliography.

Pam Thompson

September 2016

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The sky was growing red around the island and our eyes tried in the *obscure clarity* to watch the sea and the island at the same time.

Nicole Brossard *Picture Theory*

Equinoctial

Equinoctial

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Equinoctial

1. relating to 'equinox', a period of equal hours of daylight and darkness
2. the 'celestial equinox' (an 'aerial' equivalent of the equator)
3. a tropical storm which occurs around the equator.

Preface

Viewing the Holopoem

Viewer
in the transitional zone
what you see
oscillates

between sense
and non-sense
meaning
and non-meaning

read something
between the letters
dissolve
into each other

suggest meanings
between black and white
grey maps a zone
between metal and sugar

Watch metal, watch sugar
no word defines
this juncture
though poetry points at it

as the viewer blurs
through space and time,
left eye, right eye
interpretive tensions
energies and collisions

photosynthetic poems
in three dimensions
mirror upon mirror
carry sleight of selves.

Clouds race in Chicago.
In Rio the skies are still

Right Eye

The Ekphrastic Museum

**A Peepshow with Views of the Interior of a Dutch House
1655-60**

(after Samuel Van Hoogstraten)

How we like this eavesdropping with alternating eyes,
and how he planned just what we'd see from either side.
The dog would always be looking at us, the cat, arching its back,
and the conspiratorial busts were above all this, either fixed
or floating, depending on where you were. That tame hawk,
poised at the open cage door is too timid to fly and the putti
snuggle into their wings for comfort. He's dropped a letter on the stairs.
Does it hold clues? And the key, out of reach, tantalises.

It's meant to. I'm speaking with insider knowledge.
You thought that was me at the table, cornered by men
in tall hats. You thought it was me who mopped those tiles
where shadows are slopped like dirty water. How we like
this eavesdropping, my sister and I, to see them frozen
in mid-squabble about where we've gone. The artist winks,
at how he's trapped them, how he's set us free.

Hope at 4am

(after Yves Tanguy)

not in fact as a weightless bird
which has just taken flight
nor a cliff of layered stone—

this is a sea-air scene
and the sleep you've laid to rest
flashes past like clouds

or, as Breton said, writing about dreams
can only exist as a form of love

which must be the way that this
slows to a form like suspicion
then reverts back to hope again

The Grey Forest

(after Max Ernst)

A forest is a drawing-board,
a supernatural insect,

a bone totem in a drained sea.
Its lonely and conjugal trees house
the last woman in the world;
she grazes naked skin on sharp
coral branches
trying to reach the seaweed
cathedral of shock flowers.

Summer for the forest is the future:
the season where masses of shadows will change
themselves into words and gifted beings
with eloquence will have the nerve
to seek midnight at zero o' clock.

The question again, on waking, on waking.
What is a forest?

Melancholy and Mystery of a Street

(after Giorgio de Chirico)

1.

She's a shadow herself, though the hoop's solid.
Out of the diminishing returns of arched doorways
she's close behind.

Beware tall encroaching citizens. Beware
the colonnade of sunlight. Beware tense isometric shapes
like the wagon with the deceptive inner space
which isn't space at all but flat boxed lines you'd run into
at a walk even.

Doesn't she know her world
is about to crack along invisible seams, will drift
apart?

2.

We knew. We saw how the buildings behaved, defying the horizon;
windows, black, sheared-off. We cannot blame the artist. This is no inability
to master the laws of perspective; 'this non-sense', he'd say, 'is, in fact "life",
looking for all the world like an egg with the likelihood of allowing itself
to be broken and spill runny yellow life over our fingers.

We, the metaphysicians, would approve.

Slubbed

It's not that you should ever abandon a treasure or have beautiful collections rather should this convoluted world of weather be reported to you by shopkeepers you can choose threshold or enclosure beyond all the encompassing boulevards and for reasons that you may not be able to comprehend your mind will be rucked and fissured like a bolt of silk slung across carriageways.

Passageways:

a conglomeration of cell (or nodes) in which your plotted co-ordinates may be subordinated to the needs of exhaust fumes, lorries, not to any joyous alternatives to mainstream activity; street-names like a string of curses deployed as architectural diversions

a labyrinth where you'd, in the end, accompany nothing but riffled pages, 'the ball of string that you untie etc.', feel the weight of the book in your hand, having no guide to navigate your reading, crave encounters that would bring Character A into a close range of commodities, B, C and D, notice that he'd drunk too much, 'for sale, the bodies, the voices...'. It's a type of movement from public space to private shade that prevents idleness: casual, frequently unwaged work providing opportunities to keep all gendered bodies visible and industrious.

Silent City

1. Closing

You can compose the music of mood
from the credits backward
when either winter 6am
or midnight might be settling to wake
or sleep in the puddles
where nothing is actually silent

tinnitus crossing hisses stop and go on Charles Street
without visual prompt of green man
who has hooked up with his buddies
left still red scary dude to stand
as long as you do

on kerbs dripping with visual sweat
touting glamorous grime
for trainers, bare toes, stick-
heels, sicked up substances from Subway

2. Touchscreen alley

Play the game of where the filmmaker stood
to create this gully of shadows
this canny slant orange lit set
with gilt frame windows,
its begged question
of who is out there, down
in this city street, that one.

Cultural Quarter?
Leicester or somewhere Italian
with its art tipping out
towards people unfolding hands wet
cut clean felt-tipped
sex-smeared manicured

in slippery jigsaw passing
pieces which the camera
transmutes to burning paper
or burning users of public services
which, from certain angles,
the filmmaker misses

3. Full

The sign in lights
that's propped in air
is a lie on glass
that catches two sides
of a concrete frame
whose blue is at once
there then gone
like cars stashed
for the work day
the shopping
the evening
never even a glass
that's half full
half empty not even
a place too tight
for reversing
for a ticket we drop
so the machine
at the foot
of the stairwell
won't allow us to leave

4. Headlights home

We flag down the headlights home
pissed out of our heads
bare arms, bare legs
black and white at 6.30 am
at 10 pm we're in colour on buses.

We track down headlights alone
in twos in groups,
crouch down behind winter twigs
like the hunted or hurt
in a film from the fifties

We crack open the night head
alone where twin lights barge rain
sheets dragging bought freight
out of sight of the meter

5. Street level

After the bars and clubs shut
fast food aquaria
float burgers,
lasagne, on glass.

Shoaling inside
hungry clubbers.

The queue ends outside
and the girl in the blue and white dress's
day is still spilling over
like hair, a blonde shawl,
her ex said don't cut
as she drifts
from pavement to counter
from counter to last bus
her day overfull
unstoppable
in the next shot
flood flash flame
balled lightning

film trick
that showers and scorches
the girl
her mates
and lads near McDonalds who are flagging down women

in another city
in a street like this

unfilmed
her ex
compliments the colour texture length
of his girlfriend's hair

6. cone

capsized traffic
urban lanes
metal arches

lampposts instead of trees
turn-circle taillights

Mock fights
young men
in focus not

choreographed
stride ahead of their shadows

Holiday Interiors

(after Roy Fisher)

1. The Swimmers

Instead of a garage they had constructed a pool
and by the light of the crackling candle
he was poised for a dive like a figurehead
on a stately but obsolete Rolls Royce.
There were wings. I counted them.

But there was no water,
no carpet, only floorboards, shiny as new steak,
where the fat is clean, white
yet hardly a common occurrence
like the wearing of one's heart on a rolled-up sleeve.

She was accustomed and stood
with a towel draped over one arm
like a caricature maitre'd while musak
slid persistently down the concealed lining
of the living-room curtains.
I knew there could be no entry;
that I had to prepare for his battered skull,
its bruising coming up slow and sure
the colour of a basalt water-feature
in a black and white catalogue.

She dried him. I watched the rippling
chlorinated blue of her underslip;
his hair, liquorice; a hand, hers,
all a blur, even digitally enhanced
when I later lay each image out carefully
displacing sofa, two chairs, my fingers
paddling in shallows of gloss trying,
unsuccessfully, to make his hair run.
Manic splashing from under the rug
so I lift it to let the pool in at last.

2. The Arrival

You have packed too many outergarments;
your skin too readily absorbs high factors;
you have cast doubts on the efficacy of photo-sensitive lenses.
You have not yet made a decree on the appropriate
of opening of mesh shutters; you have offered no opinion
on Andalucian viniculture.
You have not come too yet, have you?
You have displayed weals from the wicker slats
of the patio chair on your back throughout the evening
like some cruelty inflicted at the hands of water barons.

You have the look of a man newly awoken under water
having discovered under eye pouches swelled with saline
and microscopic life-forms

You would think of employment statistics.
You would, what do these people do, think that,
despite the bolt-hole. You being you appear in Indonesian floral shirts
and open and close doors of old Spanish hardwood
with the noise of knuckles cracking.
You wouldn't necessarily have chosen handprints
in pink stucco beneath these pantile terraces.
You might have pushed the walls out just a little further,
have hidden in one nondescript grey breezeblock
spent matches, the philosopher's stone.
You might, having been barred from external night-time
electricity, have raised gas-flares around the pool; have been
more ceremonious with expiring winged creatures.

3. The Twin Room

You've moved in the night. What calibre
of heat is your bedfellow?
Conversely, night moves. A shift to the left.
No planets stuck onto green painted walls.
No still legible faint hurt scrawl
under useless wash off. *Fuck off*
fucking dickhead. Prehistoric. Imagine
torchlight. The cave billowing around you.

A guide pointing out daubs. Translation.
Lion/Pig/Bigot. Telling you how it was.
Lurch back to the right. Symbols
denoting woman/man. You get it
at last. Please notice above you
bats. This last entrance is very small.

A woman's hands may enter first.
Timer. How do they keep the water cool
let alone hot?

4. The Single Room

A civilization has sprung up in your bathroom
like Mesopotamia or the dynasty of Xia or Shang.

Faucet. Object of veneration.
Patina of holiness. Lustre of enamel.

But water is scarce and naturally precious.
(Profligate splurge of dry toothpaste smile)
How will you adopt the leitmotif of water
as leaders in newly independent nations do?

The Chinese, it must be admitted,
are not the only water despots.

You are not a natural force. Snowmelt
or monsoon? Self-cleansing prophecies.

The just and the unjust standing close
together might catch rainfall equally

but the luxury of continuous rain depends
on which side of the mountain the mirror's mottled.

5. The Frog-Light

Translucent, a lost world on green plastic lily-pad
complete with authentic crystal water drops.
She takes it everywhere, and its battery box

It holds the dark poetic night of her soul.
That's why she clutches it, won't give it light.
Leaves the slim cylindrical hollows unfilled.
Light is whorled in her ground floor indignation.
Battery alibis rest in bubble plastic.
Whenever she waits a frog never happens.
But it waits as the mirror fakes it for her.

6. The Kiosk

The outside is papered with magazines
you can't read but the locals say
she'll translate them

if only

you could see her properly, what with
her small stature and the counter piled
high with all the returns,

story had it the muse

pool dried up, there was nothing in it
for them, they put their clothes back on,
continued alone

with this

in mind, I noted, returned, a bride stripped
bare by her batchelors, a nude woman with horse,
arcades, porticoes, enigmas, with one,
or maybe two breasts included, the kiss
of the dream women, a forest of symbols
(no heads, female)

then she stood up, gestured a commanding
arc, that's all it took.

7. The Information Bureau

The important thing is to keep moving.
Whatever it is, tear it up, break it apart.
Place the various pieces in different spaces
or places. Create little interventions
with these pieces. Make sure though
to keep moving. Watch for a bigger moon,
one that's shaky and double. Find
words and look at them from different

angles

everything happens very quickly.
The pause is important but then keep
moving. Make your own map. These
are old but useful to start with. Enter a
storefront you've always been curious
about. Hand-painted signs, neon time
has forgotten. See what pushes. With
these things inhabit a new space. Spaces.

8. The Museum

Excavating meaning from base-metals,
truth from violet crystals, the wall
against his head as if it is butting him,
wall of warm.

Fools' Gold under dark glass.
His announcement. An out-of-office message
floats past a high window.

How will the children?

I catch the hem of his words.
His voice, a gesture. Excavating.
Kabuki statement from me:
smoke in the foyer will curdle our bones.
Linking index fingers, an ideogrammatic pact.

In the name of the father! A joke.
Do not. In the museum.
Appear too old. Stand behind dark
glass. The warm wall is a put-down bed.
His beseeching turn of the spine
as he lies on it. We could make a go of this.

Then, the trespassing public,
imprinting lip shapes on Japanese paper.

What are you breathing? He asks, at last
Excavating.

Animals appear in righteous furs denoting song.

9. Football Table

1am. The football table has been slept in.
Next to the line of reds
a small solstice
without a sun. Only a ping pong ball
to suffice.

Ratchet the handles.
Creak of fused legs and feet booting air.
If you look at it from here you can make out
an actual universe beginning.

A a ping- pong ball at its centre:
its inhabitants are adept at moving in formation
at wearing the team's colours
at missing it, big time
when it most matters.

Now repack the duvet into
the goalmouth, like a parachute.

Far cries from another galaxy, too hot, too hot

10. The Departure

I have come this far and I didn't think you'd be leaving
but if I compare this with other eras
I notice similarities in the opening
and closing of the holdall, the stuffing in of shirts,
like coloured flags of neighbouring principalities;
the realignment of the toothpaste, brush and vetiver perfume
in your toilet bag.
What forces ever kept you at home?

Over that mountain, the fruitful ones on motorbikes
sell nectarines and wave confident blood scarves.

Mood was down. Full avoidance.

That's a dry chirrup of cicadas. The river valley is brown.

How shall I mark the time of your arrival in future?

Avoid dreaded tunnels. Climb. Anywhere.
Eat a succulent thing. Wear music

Postcards from Belfast

Springfield Road

He stops his black-cab on the street
where Orangemen march; he lists
numbers of police, armoured vehicles. Picture,
he says, August 15th 1969: burned Catholic houses; blue
smoke; smashed glass; this house, re-built without windows.
Closed, cold: a house that's turned into ice.

The Crown

Gorgeous, ornate. Too many drinks. Tom's Smirnoff Ice,
not to my taste. Outside, one of those streets
with kerbstones painted in Union Jack colours. The window
of the Wetherspoons pub is having a chair thrown through it. Lists
of football sins (Poland v Northern Ireland) will be in the papers. Blue,
red and white flagpole; dummy hanging from it. Even harsher picture.

Causeway

I'd have liked to have taken a picture
of those two giants (who tingled, no doubt, with icy
testosterone fuel), went splashing through blue
-black water, and, mad at each other's maleness, split these streets
of basalt. And I could, I'm sure, list
every item of that madness. Slam shut its banging window?

Park Hotel

Not stepping by woods but by a window
of a Belfast hotel, looking at a picture
of the night before: broken bottles, yesterday's A-listers
in bed or still out clubbing, picturing an ice-
age when, this, all this: dejected Poland fans; street-
sweepers; guys touting bus-tours, would freeze into blue

Republican Museum

Replica of a cell in Armagh women's prison. Grey-blue
breeze-blocks are covered with drawings of kids. No window
yet these are windows. In a back street
off the Falls, you'd never find it. Pictures
of hunger-strikers; harps and guitars carved in the Maze under ice-
glaze display. Tricolor: names of dead freedom-fighters. Long list.

Shankhill Road

How long did it take him to learn this list
of events; the iconography of murals, to talk this blue
passionate streak, like a kind of mariner, rescued from ice-
floes now destined to tell his people's story, wiping the window
of the Troubles, making it too easy to picture
the red severed hand of Ulster crawling up your street.

A weekend's a small window on this list
of must-sees. Wall blocking blue sky in the street,
icy gunmetal steel: future's grainy picture.

Stage-set

At around 4am
she walked toward me on a high-wire
and although I willed the weather to stay calm
a low-pressure descended

the woman-shape
in the safety-net
street was a cartoon and solid
shadow.

The Notebook of Improper Desires
(or 'Trying on the aphrodisiac jacket')

A neat text arrives
poems/scratchy things
can't be got at easily

this can be handed
all this
to anyone who'll listen

Dali hands you the aphrodisiac jacket
with its wide
shrug out hands pockets
and multiple beakers of
green

pockets like windows
you can't see the poem
the windows are dark

factory turned into college
windows on the day
when in a proper notebook
you wrote
precisely what you saw

mannequin backs
in an overlocking art room

a woman crying
a man sitting next to her holding his bicycle
as if it were a horse

but putting all your senses in
won't be enough
the poem will hide

poems are like pockets
too deep or the wrong kind of deep
fair substitutes

envelopes of absinthe
or plastic beakers
each with its own little straw

strolling along in your notebook
lets you sip
check a text if one comes in

each beaker empties
you hear shapes in your head
letting light in
white space between sounds

green envelopes licked at the edges
sealed in

having drunk the letters dry
you are getting all this down
aren't you?

Mier Bitte

(after Kurt Schwitters)

More please.
Mountains,
Tarns

with torn off pieces
of sky flung
across them,

collective of firs
stuck
in slopes above,
scree,

slates from drystone
walling,

fox turds, crisped in
the sun,

sheep skull with wool,
and even more,
smash, rip,
reassemble,

this Merz
landscape made strange
even to itself.

Assemblage

(after Suzi's Sun by Joseph Cornell)

And another thing I didn't say, that the downward spikes
of the sun's boxed rays will usually temporarily replace
the climate of an average human being's face so that if
your arrival is precise and timely, your aspect fair, and
you've surmised the first few rules of pitch and roll,
you'll navigate an empty patch of land, plant two yellow
pennants, launch a flare that dies in painted cirrus, inch
towards a glass that's clean, a shell that's lodged in air.
Next time I'll tell you more about the bench; the wooden
ball. This much is truth for now. That's all.

The Beginning of the World

(after Constantin Brancusi)

Man Ray advised but only
he would photograph his own sculptures:

sunshine on the golden bird almost made it explode.

In space, the marble egg, light and
shade set at odds and there's a ball of sun
behind

and I can't tell shadow from reflection
on this plane from where shapes
try to free themselves

though it's not the egg that engenders the shadow

but the shadow, black bodiless
stain, that emerges into existence in the shape
of an egg

Soft Tissue

She turned her head,
gestured towards a tall tree disguised as a woman,
the tree bowed two branches like the folded arms of a geisha,
the geisha turned towards the bamboo screen,
the bamboo screen projected an interplay of shadow puppets,
the shadow puppets danced into each other,
the dance swerved in the direction of an oil tanker,
the oil tanker, thinking it was a ship at sea, turned towards a harbour,
the harbour was bound by yellow and black police tape,
the police tape turned towards the body in the water,
the water turned into a watercolour,
the watercolour turned towards the inappropriate frame,
the frame screamed at the museum-attendant,
the museum-attendant rolled a spliff, turned up the volume on her i-Phone,
the i-Phone played 1,768 songs in a loop
behind where a woman turned her head
and emerged from an escape tunnel made of her own soft tissue.

The Bite of the Dream Women

But who will set up the scale of vision?

André Breton

Clair Obscur / Nicole Brossard / Griselda Pollock
/ Cindy Sherman / Louise Bourgeois / Lisa Robertson
Lyn Hejinian / Maud / Maggie O'Sullivan / Pam Brown / Rebecca Elson
Denise Riley / Pascale Petit / Boudicca / Tamar Yoseloff /
Elizabeth Fry / Frida Kahlo / Hope Mirrlees / Susan Howe
Mary Trail / Dora Maar / Georgia O' Keefe / Leonora Carrington
Lallah Rookh / Leonor Fini / Rachel Blau DuPlessis /
Emily Dickinson / Barbara Guest // Sophie Calle / Rose of Torridge
Gillian Wearing / Zenobia / Carol Watts /
Leda / Catherine Hale / Virginia Woolf / Liz Craft / Alice Notley
Helen Scalway / Wendy Mulford / Pam Brown /
Sinead Morrissey / Erin Mouré / Zöe Skoulding

tbc.

Opticks

And if the sunns rays passing into a darke room
In the foreground , a black and white dog, sitting looking at me.
through the hole doe fall very obliquely on the glasse sides
the door ajar, angled yellow light
lattice windows on one side
coat, cloak? hanging on a hook inthe corner

thus the Sun, by reason of his distance,
appeares coloured on his edges
beyond, a courtyard

On a black peice of paper I drew a line
whereof one halfe was a good blew the other
a good deepe red
Hexagonal mirror in golden frame and framed landscapes either side
two red chairs askew

and looking through each pinhole
Pop ups
And looking at it through the Prisme
it appeared broken in two twixt the
colours

the window being opened
that the Sun or other terminated light
might shine freely

its shaddow would be coloured on its edge
anamorphic cupids on the top
tiptoe to see
gold if it bee not soe thin
as to bee transparent
one colour when looked upon
another colour when looked through

artist's paint art and metaphors
Lignum Nephriticum deprived of its blew
made yellow acid salt aquis fortis
salt of potashes , of common wood ashes doe restore the blew colour without
making any change in the yellow
why a blew seene by one eye&a yellow by the other at the same time produces green
Leafe Gold
that vision be thus made
is very comfortable to the sense of hearing
which is made by like vibrations

the sensorium
by the aether itself

transported vibrating

why two images of both eyes make one image in the braine
prismaticall colours appeare in the eye in a contrary order to that which they fall on
paper

that vision thus made
aerial
transported
vibrating

Left Eye

Through the Hologram

drift

the purpose is just
this, to push your life at the edges

to step out, blur borders so yellow bleeds
into blue and the scarlet
rectangle balances

there

in your dry room, your landlocked thoughts
are on time-lapse

now

sudden lights like waves

another frame of mind freezes
into one by Hokusai

you can walk around it,
old gesture in close-up,
from deep to shallow,

viewing-points around a body:
of water, bodies mostly are
water, you can only wait, drink, smoke

close the curtains
on that asexual moon or the tide

won't ebb like uneven boundaries
suggestive of fear around
subsidiary colours, by association

the purpose of drift is to push
at the moment leap blue

sharp edge of an ice wave grazes
one heel however its dimensions
are not dissimilar from those of parachutes
that land wild thoughts, some which

will die, your unleashed ones
in an upside down turn of place
where you must breathe on your hands

then

reach into the hands of others
to pull whatever's in there free from the frame.

Roaming

King's Cross
in its own time
lives behind/outside listed windows
cracked panes masked by reinforced glass

The evening owes the morning nothing
or something. Traffic
exchanges at intersections at any time
it's continuous

by Subway
alongside of pizzeria/s and curry palace/s
pre-booked on a website
it comes

like this in a hundred cities
verisimilitude
in fixtures, fittings, lodges for
the footsore and the time-poor.

Night, blips of stars,
after the exploring, the drift, shock
of new flesh, at St Pancras next day, the loss

Seven Days

(after Pam Brown)

#

The buildings shimmer
in a night cold-haze.
Twenty
years ago the road
you walk beside
like a penitent
was the same
apart from double
yellows.
The children's
playground,
Julie's Cycles,
Co-op,
Ayurvedya
Holistic Clinic,
outfacing windows
of red-brick
Infants and Juniors
where parents
signed
petitions of hate
then 180 degrees,
and 85 Adderley Road
where our old ghosts
shift
other people's furniture.
At either side
of the crossing
bollards,
disguised
as children
loom
shiny and multi-ethnic.
An experiment
in the uncanny.
The end of half-term,
mad lurch to
Christmas, teachers
staving off
Monday
in The Clarendon
like you did

then sat
drinking home-brew
straight from the jar
until
there was no point
in going to bed.

#

Now you're stuck
in a queue
near work.
Quick wink
green and one car's
through.
Wharf-side
warehouse's slippage:
The *Quay*,
now a Tesco Metro.
You remember
the pub's
dark sticky spaces,
skeleton, big blokes
battling the Wii.
The afternoon—
charmed,
under a bridge,
swan-still,
not a cloud above it
or in the water,
sculls along
untethered.
Clocks
have fallen back
and the lost
hour returns
with a borrowed
overcoat,
pockets stuffed
with pumpkin flesh
and dead
Diwali fireworks.
Whatever
jabbed at your brain
in the night
has left
a bruise but it's alright.
You've swung
into the car-park
without a killing.

Switch off the engine.
Gather yourselves
for the day.

#

The day the skin
between two worlds
slit between
my fingers
I was reminded
of popping a sausage
as it sizzled in oil
its furtive collapse
as juices
leaked out.
The day
I slipped my hand
through and
clutched bony
air, peeped,
saw my eye
winking back,
smelt vinegar
and pears.
You're all whoo whoo
and white sheets.
Ghost with its arms out.
Ghost with green face.
Be measured
and seated
with curious demeanour,
read
headlines at angles,
don't react.
There's a lot of us
out here.
We've got just about
forever,
take your time, don't
look back.
Tuesday evening,
song of thunder,
white cat leaps
in darkening hail
and no-one
claps eyes on
anything but shadows
with pointy heads
on a bus-shelter.
You'll put the wheelie-

bin out, scoop guacamole,
tell yourself
three fifty-word stories
about avocados,
keeping a fourth
behind your lower
lip should lights
go out.

#

Guildhallstone
Jain temple, concoct
cornice then flatten
nestish. Tabard made
of railings
on the Newarke.
Portico and eye-hole,
Imagine sailors,
this far inland, then
booty beyond Bragdate,
no plunder,
levelling with suffrage,
standard issue
without king's men
or any oak-stamped
blessing. Royal bad hatch
maggot where museum's
a thought then forgotten,
another road widened,
people tucked
inside peripheries, forget
Wednesday enclosure,
land's been suborned and hacked
since sea left it.
Concoct fresh leverage.

#

street's undercover flight
and self-love is it
narcissist or dynastic,
kinaesthetic strokes
after a tawdry landscape
knitted from sedge celeriac.
2010. Swings on its half-way
hinge jams nose
against nose and
that pane in between
allows optical bruise
sellers strict or
speech posting flyers
beneath festival
or in between them, thin
gum and starch raiders
but, Thursday memory,
Sagrada Familia. Nothing.
more quite yet.
Buttress/es in my mind.
Flying. The wings
with my hangover
head lost. Step
by vertiginous step
and a view of a city
turning perplexed
a temple still half-made
follow hem of a tourist trail
small pieces then
alarm of jigsawed air
and presumed cell deaths

#

Friday's avocado
has dressed-down
in smart jeans
and button-collar shirt.
Only the brogues have
higher fat content.
Too hard for consumption
she mellows at her desk
in the sun's full-beam
until the moment
of optimum
deliquescence,
a process which corporate
necessity could reverse
in seconds

Last night ...

I dreamed of Clair Obscur.
She was sitting on my bed, offering me walnuts.
These are tiny halves of brains, she laughed,
They will nourish us on our journey.
I was naked, and she watched me
dress. In dreamtime, this took forever
but I was ready exhibitionist to her voyeur.
We were leaning on railings
looking down at the Thames. She checked her watch.

It's time.
Then we were flying
like figureheads, flares in the night-sky,
bloomed then dropped. The smoke of dreams
is more like steam, steam from a boiling kettle.
Last night ... dream that scalds, dreams that freeze.

In the night garden

(Clair tells a story...)

I wasn't there but I heard the birds,
looking for planes were restless.

No, I was there, it was the Amazon
and hummingbirds flickered through my hair
or then again it might have been Iceland—

the white belching core of the volcano
or the highest reaches of particled air
beyond clouds, tears, salt-water,
with misguided flying-fishes, shoals of stars,
oceans of lost planets blindly lurching home
through the dark, the evening, growing chillier.
I was there alright:
bedding down; communing with amphibians—
devouring my young.

Partly underground

(Clair tells another story and shows the way)

We were going to live partly underground.
So much shot over powder: don't say
'cast me a steady toplit mountain',
causing a volcano to erupt in Iceland
and ground all flights out of and into the UK.

Manifesto follows manifesto into a
multi-hued muddle. Patrons of desperate causes
have already thrown out the rest
and I am blue grey light brown blown broken.

My head was against the scalding yellow wall;
there were self-sufficient wild animals
in great numbers (elk, eagles, woodpeckers etc.)
and I wanted to tell you about my world.

Mists, dust. I wanted so much to tell you about that.

On

(Clair's timekeeper)

This watch
is automatically aligned
to the body movements
of the wearer,
meaning
that when person lies down
its hands close together
at twelve o'clock,
three o'clock and nine
are brought on by sitting
in opposite directions,
and five and seven

mean feet up, two,
bent over, ten, bent back.
In sleep, watch becomes
compass, hands

become needle,
join together
in random nocturnal spinning.
so if I wander this city

without compass,
map or GPS, to designate north
or south, my pulse will throb
against this watch

as my body pushes on past

Run-offs and diversions

(Clair travels, gives advice)

take any route
via dismembered surrealists

the old house Googled
brought to you from that day in 2012
when the blind photographer
passed by

hid it with cladding
even the laser-beam won't reach that far
why not any route

my secret room take that to sea

or into the sky look from the wrong angle

it's lost what of all those monied seconds

a phone with time inside it.

Can't drop from a wrist

like a Turler loss

Once, twice, three times

Geolocate

Or turn all those functions off

Only Dancing

(Clair visits the David Bowie exhibition)

1.

Pictures of the moon from Apollo 8:
as if someone was pulling it on invisible threads
through a slit in the universe

planet Earth was blue
and there was nothing we could
do about eyes that denoted 'other'.

and, my God, he could have populated
constellations with his selves.

We watched, listened. Something had shifted.

2.

Not so when she glittered his eyes
in the night, tinselled his cock.
His imitation/adoration just went as far
as rooster razor-cut and platforms.

Ah, not as far as the music went
because she'd kept up. Queen Bitch.
It could have been me. It was.
You could have done better than that.

3.

Time takes a cigarette from the swishy
queen, the gorgeous boy,

camp as a row of tents, this sheer male
tart, hands it first to him, then her,

that summer,
he pulls on a finger, then another finger,
his joints crack, his back too,

whoah, whoah, whoah,

I hate that, I can hear it now.

See you posing.

Is this the mind's eye, we're talking about?

It's sleepy as hell, anyway.

His cigarette goes out.

Mine's stubbed to dust.

4.

goodbye
to the leather leotard
the lurex bodysuit
with rabbits and hands
to pointed black nails
to the moss-green leotard
the red plastic boots

the Pierrot costume
goodbye
to blue flowers
to the capsule,
to the white cape,
to scarlet kanji characters

meaning
*'One who spits out words
in a fiery manner'*

5.

And so to the 'eighties, cowboy president astride
a pile of white powder, aftershocks,
a whirring, then, crash-down

on a solarised beach New Romantic hinterland
between Hastings and Beachy Head.

We too had our Pierrot moments,
painted on opportune tears.

Scary Monsters. Hope
you're happy too. Cue bulldozer,
it's behind you, one
slip and you're done for. Come away from the shoreline,
that breastless mermaid is life-support
useless, belly swelling,
step closer, those are wrinkles. *Oldmaid*.

Don't say it's true. This won't take long,
then back to the 'fifties' predictable kitchens.
It's time to stop/start taking advice, to reassemble
the beach how it was, in proper colours also.

6.

Comedic effect :
it could be a clapping audience in there
but today, you open a drawer
and a song starts up,
close it, trap the music inside,

open close, open close.
Stuffed in the bottom drawer
the gold maxi coat, purple trousers
and silver platforms. None
of them fitted. The song starts up.

You shut its mouth.
In the top drawer,
Berlin, cycling to the studios,
the come-down after LA,
sharing a flat with Iggy,

in love with Nietzsche
and on the wrong side
of fascism's wall, maybe it's
still the chemicals talking, cold
electric thin white duke
acting for all the world as if these were
the last days of Weimar,

“and the guns shot above our heads
and we kissed as if nothing can fall”

we can be heroes ...
Worth leaving this one open.

7.

After recording,
he wandered out of the blue
 away from his shadow
and the window-frames leaned in
 and the shadow stretched away

inside that hour where last notes quivered
above coffee in polystyrene cups
and all the other hours became indigo, violet

and you'd surely be rewarded
for your waiting in the not-dawn
of improbable light-beams,

when maybe he'd hold out his hand to you,
maybe not

8.

Off to perform, she can never tell
what the audience will be like, even when
she's honed her act,
sealed all the cracks in the delivery,
has the cues off pat

and even he knows the songs by heart
without needing to rehearse,
still has to rely on the rest of the band-
too much rock and roll behaviour
to his left and his right, he'll be

eclipsed. In the end
she can only double-check in the mirror
that the eye make-up's fixed,
skim a last glance how her backside
looks in black leather

and even if all this is just a metaphor
for how he is, earthling,

it's okay for anyone
to wink at the moon before going out,
and not to wait
for its approving wink back.

Not in a straight line

(Clair makes connections)

this is the here I wish you were
to feel all those lost seconds
clinging to the walls

butterfly room at the Tate
the artist watching at home on his Macbook pro
they settle suck sustenance from visitor's clothes

tempting to brush them off
assistants in the room of life
equatorial species and mock time-

zone heat thee was the here
but those are the lost seconds
thick as a butterfly heap,

in the time gallery's
the spit and bicker
between men who rule

have ruled/think they might have
ruled sea, stars, imagine them
squabbling over speed

the deftest click and zoom
into a Google Universe. For the butterfly artists,
collectors of chaos

The Telling

(in other words, how Clair finds it)

Sail towards the story March, early eve. Steep path. Storm.
inauspicious near night raindrops
passing through the laser
 turn into emeralds
back into raindrops depending cloud
wrapped (Wrapt/rapt?) moon watch
the timekeeper pulseless never
to lose more than seconds in rough seas incredible

to drench it transform-fix-figure intense
representation of the look

Hold. See how heavy/light –ness amaze
would it tick tock men breathing in the minutes the over
elation more than one the other is carried back to underglass

In the Conservation Room

(We stare into the hologram)

This is the March you wish it was seven years under glass
(time) the hologram wanderer over
waves or just on sensing feet an amaze

of reflections stuck on it catches them intense
sidelong face on look down into green incredible
now you see it now you haven't a hope and anyway the public never
get in here so who's it for? Watch

for the plates turning pink signs oxide taint emerald

artifact where? between the viewer and the plate green-diode laser
size of a pen season expanding raindrop

pipette-fed with green Harrison's dream safe from any storm

Love Song to a Meteor

(Clair identifies with a part of the universe)

I love the way you disguise yourself as precious;
you are the jet-bronze,
but sensible offspring of asteroid,

progeny of iron and rock.
calcium-flecked,
and just as we'd know what foods

were in your cupboards
from crumbs on your kitchen floor
so these flecks

tell us which planet
jettisoned you into the undefinable,
because the space we call space

is just that. I love the fact
you make rough-
hewn a must-have look,

how you've cut your own corners,
have the capacity for mass-destruction
yet twinkle benignly behind glass.

But most of all I love your appreciation
of the irony of your own name,
nothing 'meteoric' at all about you,

as now we'd have it,
you are not on the rise, are no shooting-star,
you're fixed, stuck, well-labelled.

And can be felt all over
at certain hours of the day
by sticky exploratory hands.

The Dolphin Sundial

(Outside the Royal Observatory)

Imagine we arranged to meet in its shadow.
The gnomon is the converging of its tails.
This hour's quarter would be cast at an angle
on that plate, one that befits weather, season,
and how we each view it. These creatures are sea-
starved but inhabit this element with a twist
of grace. The sculptor chose bronze
for their bodies as it holds heat, throws off sun
dazzle, even in winter it would warm us, bronze
animals latching on to the plate, twist
of wave underneath, more like a tree's bark than sea
matter. We've walked in that park in every season.
Met in pubs nearby, shared chips, sat at angles
to each other, and like the dolphin's tails,
converge sometimes, cast one mutual shadow.

Degrees Zero

(Clair attends the exhibition, *At The Water's Edge*, photography by Ansel Adams, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, July, 2013)

*

Ansel Adams could catch a beam
of water in a concave lens, then arrest a wave
as if it were solid, like Hokusai did, the front,
a wall with curving parapet, its length
from there to here. I'm real, standing in green.
Green narrows, then spreads—that slick diode laser

bounces off, Ansel's wave, then this laser,
a flood, and I'm split, a split beam,
hard to tell real from replicant, what type of wave.

Stand here, the hum fractures, in front
of hurled lit water or wet light, clingfilmed lengths,
lapping, wrapping, unwrapping —is this green

sleight of eye a Pepper's Ghost, or has green
produced an aide mémoire, a laser
drenching its target, in its sure aimed beam,
real, replicant, reborn, for ancestors to find, wave
aside its gimcrackery as not forefront,
cutting-edge at all. Old tech. Dull. Grab this length

of time and tug. Then this, this, each length
pulsing like a haul, and now with greenery
of the sea astern, athwart, midship, not laser-
lanced, Leviathan, freed from its beards, beams
fame—clipper, flickering through its incarnations. Wave.
Yes, from the decks, we do, at people in pub gardens; front

of house commotion in the shop, modern crew of kids, in front,
behind, jostled aside by grown-ups. July—lengths
of holiday to come. Now, just me and the figurehead, green
as I remain, if less so; more poison/envy glow lasers
each cell, switching my blood with chlorophyll, this beam
of wood, sculpted into woman rears into air like a wave.

The tale: in short chemise, her "cutty sark", her waves
of hair like black whips' tongues, she swirled in front
of Tam O' Shanter, this Nannie Dee. A witch? Lengths
of legends parcel up women that way. At night, under green
light, figurehead reverts back to woman; laser
to meridian, arcing histories under its beam.

*

Those waves of wrecked sleep,
merciless beams of headlights on bedroom walls

the night's back-to-front —
still unravelling under green laser.

beam wave
front length
green laser

Figureheads

This one has its eyes closed look,
Do you think she's praying?

I don't know
but she's clutching her book
as though she's scared
the waves will tear it from her hands

Elizabeth Fry

as the whole world's
at risk from weather
what does it matter
if you steer your heart off course

Mary Trail

Oh diva,
let it crash into rocks
or onto a boring unpopulated shore.

Leda

My voice, over here,
and I set off through mist
Then no, *here*
And I start to turn then ...

Muttering,
or wind in the waves

You fucking sssslag

Rose of Torridge

No-one paints those without arms,
heads

Cutty-Sark

Zenobia

Boudicaa

Clair Obscur

London sky/light/time/line

(a pantoum)

High-rise temerity stares down history.
Pathway and its contending views.
Soon an arcane ritual will be shared.
Wonder at the small chairs.

Pathway and its contending views.
Peering into intricate machinery.
Wonder at the small chairs.
Instead of the many who prepare time with water.

Peering into intricate machinery.
A museum cake full of sighs and misshaped labels.
Instead of the many who prepare time with water.
Why such gaudy figureheads?

Peering into the intricate machinery.
A museum cake full of sighs and misshaped labels.
Instead of the many who prepare time with water.
Why such gaudy figureheads?

A museum cake full of sighs and misshaped labels.
This is why the dolphins are paired.
Why such gaudy figureheads?
Those clouds will hide the laser in the night.

This is why the dolphins are paired.
So often ships went down and stars went out.
Those clouds will hide the laser in the night.
Soon a new handover.

So often ships went down and stars went out.
Clockwork's other version is in a secret room.
Soon a new handover.
For there must be diagonal glass panels.

Clockwork's other version is in a secret room.
High-rise temerity stares down history.
For there must be diagonal glass panels.
Wonder at the small chairs.

Near Greenwich Park, March 2013

(Clair eavesdrops)

The sky, our time-piece, now that it's lighter

I hadn't been back for a year,
found evidence of the sun's bright
stealth, no sign that winter would fight
it, outside the Maritime Museum whose cool
interiors conspired to shun that busy old fool.
I wanted the works, for us to bring
our cheating hearts for a longer fling,
but I was seasonal, one who'd run her course,
an 'only for a day or so ' thing or worse,
once sought, now blocked, love's moans and sighs.
The afternoon drained seconds from the sky.

I drank wine. We kissed,
synchronised sensations, false intimacy kindled online
oblivious to public gaze, this
misalignment in a hotel room; we missed
calls, averted our eyes from texts, ears from phone-clocks dumb
announcements of each hour, thumbed
through catalogues of each other, riffling pages
that you wanted to read, the ages
you spent releasing my pent up tides
left me dry as when sheer brutish will collides
with resistance. Anyway, why be tender, no lover,
I. What was hardly begun can never be over.

Time ... immersed in green

South of time Blachehedfeld

Blaec

Haeth

Plague pit once common land

Clare (*Clair*) might

change the tense

Its only bondage was is the circling sky

Mulberry-bushes where the boy would run

To fill his hands with fruit are grubbed and done

Not so

seas meet

grow

rude speed

made share

forecasts below, the pulsing starved do electric
hunch speculation

lead

vine

ruling

is

listing
measurement

grow early you offences because the meets run
spread a may think siege
read to dusk

no effect

write
orange alone

ree/d/hee/l

instruct exists

pavement guarantee

bell to it

headquarters laboratory

health labour

your ask and occupation

shareholder forest

carrying
shift fortune suppose
geography route lip
for expeditions

grow repose

this

there

ash aspirations

rumour

is

hierarchy

grow early you offenders

border green fluids exceed

morale merriment

borough

literature

meat

your ask

because arrive

for arrive may not

voltages roman open you

your ask and object

for leave of the constitution

rude cave listing

not under scaffolds

foods below made translation

for leave of the constraint when the may monopoly

merriment and book

exceed

hell

rain

sections

arrest arrows

do the while for nettles

passing

no beauties

trip

grow early
read to dusk

you occasions

no edition

ruin

is

leaping port in grace

needle heed

your ask and obstacle

carrying shelf formation aside

ribbon chase a zone

wolf peach patrol ground

found
here
deck

suppose gene

then

exceed hemisphere

steel

sweet sponsor

while you cargo

amaze huntings

upbraid

close maps

argument armies

reach the less

passport
greek
harmony kit

pass

shade

body

green flame

race seas

the parks

architecture

deepens

suppose gardens

will river life

and the companion

hardware kingdom

suppose garment
and the comparison
the prohibitions
will rock lifestyle for exclusion

no east

rose

revenge chase winter gravity carrying
shame forecast
leaping polymer in god you arrive
open for leave of the conspiracy

harm kiss

for the leave of conservation

for exchange

bolt green flash

exceed heating fluids

below

lifetime for excitement

no ease

rope

is grow yourself exit beasts

lighting material

Victory

(Clair's victory)

Easter Saturday. At three pm, she lifts the swipe-card
from the slot on the wall in her hotel room and the lights go out;
down the stairs, past reception where a tall German couple are checking out
and Saracens v Tigers battle on a screen above the desk.
She takes the back route into the High Street, across the car-park
and into the pavement's jostle and hum.
The windows of The Greenwich Tavern look out onto the park.
Peering in, she considers a drink, an hour or so with her book
but it's crowded, people are eating late lunches - steak and kidney smell
pummels passers-by, already she's climbed the steep hill
to the Royal Observatory, marvelled at sea-clocks, their intricate
workings, their canny mediation between waves and stars
and now she finds herself inland with a sense of the river
close by, drawn towards a ship, Yinka Shonibare's,
stoppered in glass, mounted high, African -print sails catching the sun,
the eye, this 'Victory' superimposed over Nelson's,
first on his plinth, and it pulls her, sure as any tide
or instruments of navigation, from home to hotel, back to here.

Through the hologram

Azimuth. Sunwatcher. Its house. She holds out her arm. Stretches.
Horse's tail. Take it. Forget them. A baton. A torch. A flame.
Smell of tea on deck. Wool Clipper. 1883. Australian wool.
Fastest. New York. Cargo of coal. 1916. Repaired. Table Bay.
Cutty Sark. 1922. Nothing is known. Lallah Rookh. Back
from Shanghai. Wrecked. Kashmiri Princess. Maud. Some say.
February. Unseasonal spring. Cyclorama. Old behaviours. I fear.
Fan museum. Tonight's sky. Denem. Vega. Altair. Summer Triangle.
Sky flashes. As if a real city sky. He switches it on. Now it's July.
Dirty work. Up late. Sweeping. Maintaining. Last of the £5 glass
of wine. Emergency. Woke up. In ambulance. So sorry. Red
painted toes. Sextant. Almanac. Chronometer. H4. Bi-metallic strip.
Pearlised blue sandals. Switch phone camera to panoramic. Sweep
across the park. The river. "Visions of the Universe". "Earth like a blue
pea". Apollo 2. "I hid it with my thumb." Neil Armstrong. Other side
of the moon. Not dark. Only sometimes. Sugar lumps. Rocks. Watching
the vehicle cross Mars. Its camera. For ages. Lodestone. Magnetic ore.
Ships struck feldstone edges. Isles of Scilly. "Ship wrecked in a storm
of a rocky Coast". Pieter Muller the Younger. Late 17c. Pendulum clocks.

Quando

(*immersed in Eduardo Kac*)

the light/ deceives /the lens slow/y
the lens/deceives/

the

light/slow/mind

the light/lies/slow/the lens/deceives
lentamente

lenta (slow) mente (mind or lies)

Adrift

(immersed in Eduardo Kac)

BREATHE
beyond the axes

l

floats

e t

t e

r s

blown

acro

ss the light field

disrupt

fake stability

Phoenix

(immersed in Eduardo Kac)

Burning

W flaring

 shifts red blue

magenta

Convergence

\

Glory Sky-Shell

Adhuc

(immersed in Eduardo Kac)

The same evening, once a year, whenever
the clocks spring forward and equal day and night sees light
prolonged, softer, more settled, whenever
the moon shrinks to a tense pearl, whenever
crowds gather and wander around the floating
word scatter-plane, it's a reminder of whenever
certain events collide, also of whenever
some habits are likely to fade, holding water,
dipping parts of our songs into water,
only have to ask if you can print
them out in 3D. That way, to print,
yields itself to wonder. Then print
a whole city, inhabit it, whenever
you walk its cool streets, look up, the print
stamps itself, you decode every building in print,
and so therefore in the light
of this, when tourists approach, ask you to print
places for them to visit, you are judicious and print
those places you'd never visit. Why are they floating
like counterintuitive fish? All this floating
makes you think they are avoiding the prints
of letters, as they tumble through glass, water,
or is it blue light which keeps the appearance of water?
How long have we known the properties of water?
I like to think of the tides rolling over sand, prints
of foam, and of ornate Chinese clocks where water
puts out a series of flames, clepsydras, water
instead of shadows cast by the sun, whenever
it rained, time was replenished of course, 'water-
thief', eking out the hours, we can't hold water
on our wrists or in our homes in such a way, light
strikes glass under which hands overtake, light
and its variegated waves, something it shares with water
and all the while the words, above, are floating
but not above, no, in the element, through it, floating,
that water-word, not flying, shining, floating,
though, as they commanded the elements, as if water
were a rink, turquoise ice and that floating
was an Olympic sport for 'texts' that are read via floating
mechanics, yes, you 'float' around, among them, print
an interpretation which will be in flux, is floating
and unstable, oh you who are floating
through your present anyway, so that whenever
there's a threat of sinking you are shocked, whenever
you are fished out of the element in which floating

sustains you realise just how light
you have become. If anyone sees you being hauled into light
from , well, light, there is no shame here. Light
is for the unravelling, we are all floating
through the universe anyway, particles, light
leaves the earth then returns, takes its time, yes, light
is its own superpower. Sun fragment on water,
a river, canal, still rather than moving, light's
gestures of friendship, its scattering becoming ripples, light
tangles itself with shadows, leaves its imprint
on several layers, is a dimension shaper, prints
featuring effects of light prevail in 3D cities, whenever
these passages are crossed. However, whenever.
This is how the sense comes from the words whenever
they travel, letters, words, never to be in print,
fragile as glass, empty as air, water
language which was neither here nor there, light
was/is their element, never still, always floating.

You approach and ...

She's smoking with her mates before work
on the day of the referendum but they're not thinking about
the other country tearing itself away
about a land mass leaving today at their conference they'll make a pitch
for the underprivileged. how to give their awards
to the kids in rough schools. youth clubs in Hackney not Hampstead
all that matters. this isn't her city but it is at the same
time she's tried it on earns its money reads on her Kindle each morning
from Leytonstone to Victoria the forty minutes
it takes and the changing cast around her in the carriage those old tunnels
with their individual climates strange how in some
places you can settle how in others you just want to fly even as your wings
are drying in the sun you want to take off again
with your clothes call the rest worldly goods hers are fixed at least some
of them she's heard about the boy who turned breath
into word speech that is for those who couldn't and for the first time all of
sudden fourteen a geeky boy. you could breathe into
his machine and your breath came out saying things it's like watching smoke
speaking to you or if you could blow the smoke
you smoke into words they're not inside her Kindle. never a font-size one minute
you get it the next something different entirely but
worth keeping your eyes in the same place each one alert to different things
words turning back into smoke this time into breath
and these colder mornings. after-works fixed for once she can make something
of all this. worth it for you. watch stand to one side
young women like her a future where breathing is itself another kind of speaking
smoke another kind of saying

Psychokinesis

old red bricks
stuck children still as roads
commonplace

 these
as sensation edges street-lights denials
they wedge glass
can't phone under with heat-haze edges
nurses walking
bloodstains buildings shock

Narcissus
was someone waiting seen near the hostel
heavy molecules
spiral terraces
you're on the club boy you're road

Echo at the spooky glass
 can
 cold
thought parallax
up bounced

 one-way go thinking
dark spots street-light

*

You can't put a spoke in the spiral of decline
of the hosiery. You can't melt glass,
still you pick up one end,
he picks up the other, edges of glass in the rain,
dark upright pool
next to which he stoops, sees his face,
a one-way sign swimming backwards,
and you're as helpless as Echo,
a bounced voice in a wind-tunnel
between adjacent factory units.
You can't move centuries, You can't put a spoke
It's gone. The boy stares on.
Lights up.

Back to
stuck rusted barge on a hillside
repository for crisp-bags, Kit-Kat wrappers, condoms
you might have seen them walking
centuries

*

She looks at her son as if he were someone else's
fusion of sperm and egg
as if bloodstorms under his bones had never been
You might have seen us walking together

*

The epidural took sensation away from her legs not her belly
They pulled him out with steel
These things happen
These things are commonplace
These things maybe of no consequence
Or entirely consequential

*

The waters broke
The buildings moved.
The buildings didn't move. It was an error of parallax,
it was you shaking up
molecules as you
brushed against the wedge of air
outside the working-men's club on Avenue Road.

It was spooky traffic-stopping children outside the school
with their moulded hair, veneered shoes.
It was a one-way sign swimming backwards
in a window trying hard to shrug off rain.

It was the hostel Narcissus,
his diamond stud, winking to a street-light,
kids in black who muttered 'chav',
him not turning,
laughing into his phone.

It was red-brick terraces.
You can change this by thinking. Try.
The buildings
shimmer in their own heat-haze
in the cold.
Thought did that.

But can you move the past
from there to here?

Astray

(immersed in Eduardo Kac)

*

Hooded hat frame
at the door in week
whatever
waiting for the escorted walk
signpost to well

Inside the glass house
after smashing glass
windows one to five
the police took him kicking
pepperspraypepperspray

She said do it
queen on a tenner
set bitch on fire
magic now it's gone

Going to Detroit to see Eminem.
Marry Cheryl Cole.
They poison your food.
Spit. World's corrupt .
Takeaway nights, Wednesday
and Saturday.

Sometimes everyone pretends to be royal. It's a get out ploy.
Money in a sock.
Outside,
two cigarettes, hot chocolate.
Moving air.

*

They walk. Signpost.
Bitch said get Wednesday
poison eerie whatever,
waiting. One door
smashing

spitspit
Sometimes walk.
Signpost cigarettes.
Marry Saturday.
Signpost Cole.
Tanner
set to a week, be onto
windows

They walk.
Signpost.
Poison
smashing glass eerie
outside gone

door to walk signpost and five
weeks well world's
smashing Eminem
corrupt
sometimes chocolate
outside
its moving in two socks

signpost him its on
the get glass windows

takeaway

*

air kicking hat

hot

magic

escorted

five play

pepper

royal

Cheryl

fire

spray

*

Deimos lies on its side.
Wakes groggy, out of synch
with its chattering twin.
Intramuscular twitch
in arse-cheek then depot pierced.
Weeks of voices
in this misplaced jigsaw-piece world
would make anyone
punch other aliens.

*

On the walk
Matt, the rugby-loving nurse
resurrects what's gone,
a football-pitch,
over there, the old ward.
Bus-stop,
now a shelter for smokers.

*

Deviants. Poisoners. Liars. Thieves.
They are all on Deimos.

Time
is all wrong, calculated
by fag breaks, ten a day.

No phones allowed.
TV screens are mounted high
and bolted down.

In swirling yellow mists,
Deimos's glass habitations.

*

To be astray means
you have no to and fro

loose, not on the loose,
you never wished for this

no dreams of Deimos,
insomnia, night sweats

hold your fists at your sides
hard to keep punches from bastards and liars

*

They fall off the side of the moon.
There are no ceremonies, no awards.
From down here, Deimos
is a porthole you'd never want to look through.

Ash-rise

Empty house in the Gothic season.
We thought it was not just a stage set
and had dimensions
that real cattle grazed in its rooms
eating grass you could touch.

It had dimensions but only for you.
The animals weren't real.
The grass you could pass your hand through.

We were starved but our bodies were electric.

We might have died first in the derelict
lift-shafts and cellars where light cringed
before the wreckers of light and sound but

 this place is full of holes and jump-cuts
and that's why we're caught in the hinge
of the world

 a world that has skies
re-visited by planes and if we are wide-eyed
it's because we are only new to all of this, and this to us.

The Green Apartment

I'd have headed for St Pancras if he hadn't
reminded me of the apartment in Elektron Towers,
and smoothed down my fur collar, and his eyes
weren't eyes any more, and I used my own memory then
saw it slicing its green blade through their living-room

window, you had two choices, either press
yourself invisible against a wall, or step into its blaze
like it was one of several rivers you were considering
to swim in, and I looked again and the side
of his face was silvered with time, and when he moved,

the mottling started, like a mirror worn out with old
mercury, we were thinking it into myth as we stood,
different ones. I thought myself into a street
in Blackwall, ignoring a couple of fat drunks around midnight,
fumbling in my bag for the post-it with a number,

and the key to the room where I could undress
my imagination in green shade, or green light, both,
and he would be drawing plans, starting to dig footings
as if he was thirty again, and it was all to come,
as if marriage wasn't something a person could walk through.

At the end of the laser

The clouds raced in Chicago
not like in San Paulo where they took their time

in London
Leicester
Belfast

I mouth the word noctiluculent to no-one
take a drink with ice, hang way up
in space, because we reached (we reached) this
this cave
a kind of glory sky-shell like a back-scene for a Poussin.

I think about what Barbara Guest said
about the little ghost behind the poem,
ghosts in those first holograms, ghosts not being words
but halos that could be rescued,

nuclei around which
crystallize in a mesosphere dredged
with meteoric dust, ten miles cold above the troposphere
beyond where usual weather happens,

clouds Eduardo saw racing, Icarus clouds,
during brief midsummer darkness
when the sun dips then there are aerial
texts tinged with orange and blue, space invaders,
sixty miles high kept on time-lapse,
poems you can fly around
but words race, shift, re-form as you blink
I have watched metal,
watched sugar
and via that pulsed starved electric hunch of intuition
am charged with green

Zone One: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Hologram

He called me over, held it up
to the light, tilted it against his mouse-mat;
then, a city the colour of Lucozade,
intricate, clear.

You could carry this around forever,
slip it into your pocket or bag:
this teeming, sprawling, beautiful illusion.¹

1.1 Why holography?

The above poem is from my pamphlet *Hologram* (2008) and I include it at the beginning of my thesis for as it describes an instance when a work colleague showed me a small hologram. When he tilted it one way, a city appeared to spring out in 3D; looked at from another angle, the city disappeared. The poem conveys my fascination at how the act and angle of viewing could conjour an ‘object’ that looked as if it had depth and volume but which was in actuality a pattern of light waves recorded on the flat surface of a holographic plate—although I didn’t know those details at the time.

Holography spans both science and art: my new poetry enacts ekphrastic dialogues with the processes and products of holography. In doing this, I make a claim for holography as a new context for ekphrastic poetry as both an original contribution to knowledge and in filling in a gap in the scholarship of ekphrasis. This scholarship is strongly gendered in privileging the male voice and the male gaze. My espoused methodology of *flâneuserie* provides a means of both countering and redressing such privileging from my position as a feminist researcher. A particular challenge for me in this research was how to represent a feminist consciousness in

¹ (Lincoln: Sunk Island Publishing), 3.

ekphrastic poetry. The hologram mentioned in the poem above was made by Professor Martin Richardson,² who was my advisor for this research and whose holograms of H4, John Harrison's famous timekeeper in the Royal Observatory at Greenwich, is one of my primary sources, along with an essay about it.³ Other primary sources are the holopoems (poems made via the medium of holography) of South American artist Eduardo Kac, his key concepts of holopoetry;⁴ the novel, *Picture Theory*⁵ by Nicole Brossard and her collection of essays, *The Aerial Letter*.⁶ A link between Kac and Brossard is that they are concerned, in different ways, with letters that are animated in space.

The word 'holography' is derived from the Greek words 'holos' (whole) and 'graphe' (writing). For Nicole Brossard, the hologram represents figuratively the 'wholeness' of female identity: the 'integral woman'. A holographic image – referred to here as 'a hologram' – is one which results from when light waves, usually from a laser, are reflected from an object and recorded on a holographic film or plate. A hologram records waves from the whole 'light field' reflected from the object in its solid state. The image of the object then usually appears to be floating between the holographic plate and the object. Holography derives from a branch of physics known as optics and is reliant on the behavior and properties of light. Practical applications of optics are found via various technologies and devices e.g. mirrors,

² Professor of Holography and 3D Imaging and Communication Design at De Montfort University.

³ 'Harrison's Holograms: *Stopping Time*', paper presentation for *Holography in the Modern Museum*, (London: The Royal Photographic Society, September 2008) hereafter referred to in the text as ST followed by page number.

⁴ Set out in *Holopoetry; Essays, manifestos and theoretical and critical writings*, (Lexington: New Media Editions, 1995) hereafter cited in the text as H followed by page number.

⁵ Trans. Barbara Godard, (Toronto: Guernica, 2006) hereafter referred to in the text as PT followed by page number.

⁶ Trans. Marlene Wildman, (Montreal: The Women's Press, 2008) hereafter referred to in the text as AL followed by page number.

lenses, lasers. As hologram-making is reliant on the behavior of light-waves and processes of reflection, mirrors, lenses and lasers, as tropes, recur in various ways in my poems. I have made the point that the angle of 'vision' is important in whether a holographic image can be 'seen' or not. This implies that to change a viewing angle relies on more than just the position of the eye; that it is a bodily experience.

Holography, like photography, is a practical application of the science of optics. Both photography and holography are optical technologies, but, more broadly, technologies of perception, their products being reliant on the movement of the whole body, and not just the movements of a disembodied, roving 'eye'. The difference between photography and holography as image-making technologies is that the former is received in two-dimensional form (length and width) as photograph, and the latter, as three dimensional (length, breadth, volume) as holographic image which I refer to here as 'hologram') whose 'there' or 'not-thereness' is reliant on a viewer's physical position in ways that are not applicable to the viewing of a photograph.

During the summer of 2009 I visited the hologram gallery of The Puzzling Palace museum in Keswick, Cumbria. Emily Dickinson wrote, "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant / success in circuit lies";⁷ as a result of witnessing the eerie, spectral worlds in a series of holographic portraits in the gallery I started to draw parallels between a hologram and a poem. In both hologram and poem, 'meaning' could be elusive, literally so in the case of a hologram as from some viewing positions it would disappear; a poem might yield much or very little to individual readers, or even to the same reader on different reading occasions. Both holograms and poems have distinctive properties which distinguished them from other genres in art and literature, photography, for instance, or the novel. Both a poem, as a result of its relatively

⁷ *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed., Thomas H. Johnson (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), 506.

compressed form and heightened language, and a hologram, in its ‘there but not thereness’, trigger responses at cognitive and emotional levels simultaneously. I continued to ponder links between holograms and poetry and my first poems, written around that time, were evidence of this curiosity. They were first vehicles of enquiry into the science of holography, explorations of its manifestations as art, and how these acts of ‘seeing slant’ via the hologram might be brought to poetry and for what purpose.

In viewing the small hologram of the city, and those in the gallery in Keswick, I had experienced the phenomenon of ‘parallax’ whereby the size / shape of an object changes according to the angle of viewing. I learnt from Martin that this was a key term in understanding how holograms worked, as was the term ‘occlusion’ (whereby according to the angle of vision, one object obscures another) and ‘disparity’ (where there is a difference between what is seen by left and right eyes). The distinctive properties of holographic space render viewing holographic images a different experience from viewing a painting or a photograph. A painting or photograph retains its two-dimensional form from whatever angle you view it whereas a hologram’s appearance as a three-dimensional object is reliant on a particular angle of viewing. This connects with what Eduardo Kac achieved in the syntax of his holopoems; how their reading depended on the way the reader / viewer’s eyes moved across time and space. It is exciting to think of poetry on the page as having dimensions and to be potentially kinetic in how it is composed and received.

1.2 Manipulating Space

The immediate contextual background to this research is the early years of modernism where poets and artists in Europe responded to social change and upheaval such as the dislocating effects of the First World War; scientific and technological developments in communications, photography, cinema and the writings of Charles Darwin and Sigmund Freud as challenges to previous orthodoxies. I am particularly interested in how such upheavals impacted on spatial form in art and poetry, beginning with the example of Stéphane Mallarmé's 'Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard' (1897) with its juxtapositions of typography, font size and white space.⁸ Guillaume Apollinaire's *Calligrammes* (1918) are concrete poems taking the form of the objects they describe. 'Zone', the long poem that forms the Preface to his collection, *Alcools* (1913), presents a series of events in different cities and time zones as if they were all occurring at the same time. These are frequently cited as examples of visual poetry which contain features of modernist poetry which separated it from former traditions which favoured linear narrative progression⁹. In the examples from Apollinaire there is a close alignment with the artistic practices of Cubism.

⁸ Scholarly sources on visual poetry that have informed this study are:

David Scott, *Pictorialist Poetics: Poetry & the Visual Arts in Nineteenth-Century France*, Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988, Eduardo Kac, *Holopoetry: manifestoes, critical and theoretical writings* (Lexington: New Media Editions, 1995, David K. Jackson, Eric Vos and Johanna Drucker, eds. *Experimental-Visual-Concrete-Avant-Garde Poetry Since the 1960s* (Amsterdam / Atlanta: Rodopi, 1996), Anna Katharina Schaffner, 'From Concrete to Digital: The Reconceptualisation of Poetic Space'. Paper presented at the conference 'From Concrete to Digital', Copenhagen University, 9-10 November, 2006, <http://www.logolalia.com/minimalistconcretepoetry/archives/Anna-Katharina-Schaffner-From-Concrete-To-Digital.pdf>, last accessed on 25th September 2016, Eduardo Kac, ed. *Media Poetry: An International Anthology*, (Bristol / Chicago: Intellect. 2007), Kim Knowle, Anna Katharina Schaffner, Ulrich Weger and Andrew Michael Roberts, 'Reading Space in Visual Poetry: New Cognitive Perspectives', *Writing Technologies*, vol. 4 (2012): 75-10.

Eduardo Kac refers to Mallarmé and Apollinaire and how his holopoetry is a development within the tradition of visual poetry. David Scott provides an extended discussion of 'Un coup de dés' and provides an extended discussion of its "pictorial" qualities. I elaborate on these particular sources in Zone Two.

⁹ By this I mean poetry which does not employ techniques which foreground syntactical disruption and fragmentation of form.

In comparison, ‘Paris: a Poem’ (1919)¹⁰, by British poet Hope Mirrlees, containing similar typographical innovations, is scarcely mentioned in the literature of modernism. Zöe Skoulding considers her to be “the first woman writer in English to combine the vision of the flâneur with the formal potential of European avant-garde poetry”¹¹ and that even though the poem stood out as being formally distinctive in a generally more traditional oeuvre, “the disappearance of her work is symptomatic of a well-documented tendency for women writing to slip through the gaps of canonical histories” (EC, 10). On reading ‘Paris’ I was struck by the opening “I want a holophrase”. I wondered whether this was connected with ‘hologram’: I could see that the poem was presenting multiple viewing perspectives, from a building, from the street, and that these were communicated by different typographical effects on the page. I learnt that a “holophrase” was an abbreviated pre-linguistic utterance and in the poem seemed to be connected with the ways in which the speaker sought to ‘utter’ self, (EC, 11) upper-case letters being the equivalent of shouting it:

NORD SUD

ZIG-ZAG

LION NOIR

CACAO BLOOKER¹²

Mirrlees shapes the poem as consciously visual, experimental and experiential and demonstrates a flâneuserie which has features in common with the design of my own.

¹⁰ *Collected Poems*, ed., Sandeep Parmar (Manchester: Carcanet, 2011), 2-18.

¹¹ *Contemporary Women’s Poetry & Urban Space: Experimental Cities* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 10 hereafter cited in the text as EC followed by page numbers.

¹² Mirrlees, *Collected Poems*, 3.

In Cubism, Picasso and Braque, disrupted the ‘old’ rules of perspective which created the illusion of ‘dimensionality’ in preference for a different way of ‘seeing’ which presented several perspectives at once in a painting and deliberately drew attention to its surface and materiality. Eduardo Kac contextualises his holopoetry against such a background.¹³ In *Zone Two* I position my new ekphrastic poems in *Equinoctial* in relation to those in my previous collection, *The Japan Quiz* (2008)¹⁴ and my poetry blog, *Heckle*,¹⁵ particularly poems which respond to surrealist art.¹⁶ Versions of these appear in poems in the first section of *Equinoctial*, ‘The Ekphrastic Museum’ where I consciously draw attention to the gender politics of surrealism whereby the practice of women artists and its reception was occluded by that of male artists with women all too often becoming subordinated to role of ‘muse’:

Muses are vibrant, but mainly silent, or gnostic;
unsophisticated yet consciously creative or ethical;
desirable yet appropriated givers but not owners.¹⁷

There is a connection here with the cultural history of the male and female ‘gaze’, the figure of the flâneuse, and, in an extension of those gender politics, my appropriation of the figure of the flâneuse and acts of flâneuserie. These are acts in pursuit of ‘wholeness’ of identity and correspond with a spatial shift, via the hologram, away from two dimension—into three and four dimensions. This spatial shift corresponds with the emergence, towards the end of the first section, of my figure of the

¹³ See *Zone Two* for an extended discussion.

¹⁴ (Bradford: Redbeck Press)

¹⁵ <https://www.pamthompsonpoetry.com>

¹⁶ In particular ‘Hope at 4am’, ‘The Grey Forest’, ‘Melancholy and Mystery of a Street’, ‘Slubbed’, ‘Holiday Interiors’, ‘Stage-set’, ‘The Notebook of Improper Desires’, ‘Mier Bitte’, ‘Assemblage’, ‘The Beginning of the World’, ‘The Bite of the Dream Women’.

¹⁷ Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Modern and Contemporary Poetics: Blue Studios: Poetry and Its Cultural Work* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 75 hereafter cited in the text as BS followed by page number.

Holographic Flâneuse, Clair Obscur¹⁸, as conceptual model and orienting device for the reader to navigate the collection. There is a modernist tradition of linking poetry with science, highlighting a need to suggest that it could be approached objectively and with a high degree of formal control. In the essay, ‘The Serious Artist’ (1913) Ezra Pound states that:

The arts, literature, poesy, are a science, just as chemistry is a science. Their subject is man, mankind and the individual. The subject of chemistry is matter considered as to its composition.¹⁹

“Good writing”, he says, “is perfectly controlled, the writer says just what he means. He says it with complete clarity and simplicity. He uses the smallest possible number of words.”²⁰ The sense of kinetics I find in holopoetry dates back to Pound’s metaphors derived from physics:

... the thing that matters in art is a sort of energy ...
like electricity or radioactivity, a force transfusing,
welding and unifying. A force rather like water when
it spouts up through very bright sand and sets it
in swift motion.

Poetry, being, “more highly energized’ than prose”²¹ at best will display a “maximum efficiency of expression” where “the artist must have discovered something—either of life itself or of the means of expression.”²² Pound translates evidence of “emotion” in a poem as “only part of technique, it is rhythm, cadence, and the arrangement of

¹⁸ I discuss the name in more detail on page 138.

¹⁹ *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed., T.S. Eliot (London: Faber and Faber), 42.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 50.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, 56.

sounds”.²³ Yet the practices of balance and syncopation are tricky ones; Pound further delineates these using metaphors from mythology and biology:

Poetry is a centaur. The thinking word-arranging,
clarifying faculty must move and leap with the
energizing, sentient, musical faculties. It is precisely
the difficulty of this amphibious existence that keeps
down the census record of good poets.²⁴

The tone of the essay is assured; the poet / s referred to consistently as “he”.

A “centaur”, half-man, half horse, symbolises the tug of intellect against that of the body. To be ‘amphibious’²⁵ is to live on/in both land and water. Pound emphasises a dilemma for all poets: how to reconcile formal containment with rhythmic movement. This was equally true for Eduardo Kac when designing his holopoems although his medium was light rather than the page. I note the contradictory metaphors used by Pound to describe a “good” poem. The centaur metaphor suggests muscularity; ‘amphibious’ something less ‘graspable’; protean even, able to exist in two different environments. In his influential essay, ‘Projective Verse’ (1950), Charles Olson expounds the characteristics of ‘open field composition’, poetry that relies on breath and sound. In doing so, he too adopts the language of physics, referring to “kinetic” qualities of language and “energy-transfer” from writer to reader and vice-versa.²⁶ The kinetics moves the verse forward. The tone of the writing is certitudinous like the tone of Pound’s essay. Manifesto-making is a male practice. An authoritative tone prevails with the reader being kept at a distance; the personal kept at bay

²³ Ibid., 51.

²⁴ Ibid., 52.

²⁵ I discuss the term in relation to Rachel Blau DuPlessis and Denise Riley in Zone Two.

²⁶ <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/resources/learning/essays/detail/69406> last accessed 25th September 2016.

Eduardo Kac's holopoems in the 1980s and 1990s were developed as a conscious extension of the visual and concrete poetry tradition hitherto. Their design reflects tensions involved in containing the energetic dynamism inherent for the reading of the holopoems.²⁷ The embodiment of such containment is a classic condition of poetry. Kac went beyond what working in two dimensions (length and breadth) and three dimensions (length, breadth, volume) could so far offer, including the dimension of 'time'. Kac was interested in causing an emotional response from the viewer. Colour played a big part in the design of the holopoems, and their names connote singular backstories. The ways in which Kac's holopoems are experienced involve a focus upon depth, interactivity, and subjectivity rather than on surface, distance and objectivity. The acts of travelling 'through the hologram' in *Equinoctial* denote a movement away from the latter towards the former and are particularly influenced by affective traits of Kac's work: the emphasis on interactivity, emotion and subjective experience.

In the essay 'What is Experimental Poetry & Why Do We Need it?'²⁸ Joan Retallack asks "What things can be known only by means of poetry?"²⁹ In a bid for an experimental poetics that is something more interesting than "the latest stylistic oddities"³⁰ and in terms that are somewhere "between the descriptive and prescriptive."³¹ Retallack refers to both the pleasure and shock of "alterity".³² By this I think she refers to disrupting expected structures by dialogic means:

²⁷ I discuss Kac's theories in more detail in Zone Two.

²⁸ *Jacket*, 32, April 2007.
<http://www.jacketmagazine.com/32/p-retallack.shtml> last accessed March 25th 2016.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 13.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 4.

³¹ *Ibid.*, Paragraph 5.

Experiment is conversation with an interrogative dynamic.
Its consequential structures turn on paying attention to what happens
when well-designed questions are directed to things we sense
but don't really know. These things cannot be known by
merely knowing our own minds.³³

Languages of description can take different forms according to their discipline, and
may need to change “under the pressure of new angles of inquiry”.³⁴ We need varied
forms to test them against. Physicist Niels Bohr has said that there should be a new
language to describe quantum theory's challenge to a deterministic paradigm linking
cause and effect³⁵. With this in mind, and imitating Bohr's own attempt to put such a
challenge in words, Retallack constructs a “retrospective manifesto” of
“experimental” poets of early Modernism –

Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Gertrude Stein:³⁶

WE WILL DEDICATE OURSELVES TO

1. descriptive discontinuity
2. resignation of our usual demands for visualisation and causality
3. renunciation of our usual attempts to obtain a detailed
description of the individual transition processes.³⁷

All three poets drew attention, in various ways, to the materiality of language and its
relation to the space of the page offering alternatives to linear readings and
conventional semantic development.

A poetics that can operate in the interrogative, with
epistemological curiosity and ethical concern, is not so much
language as instrument to peer through as instrument of
investigative engagement. As such it takes part in the

³² Ibid., Paragraph 3.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., Paragraph 6.

³⁵ Ibid., Paragraph 7.

³⁶ Ibid., Paragraph 13.

³⁷ Ibid., Paragraph 14.

recomposing of contemporary consciousness,
contemporary sensibilities.³⁸

In espousing the literal and figurative ‘aerial letters’ of Kac’s holopoems and Brossard’s essays as “instrument/s of investigative engagement” I have undertaken poetic experiments which re-configure the contemporary ekphrastic poem where interactive and subjective perspectives of viewing / reading displace those which are more distancing and objective. This investigative ‘poetics’ is sensitive to context and not rigidly prescriptive like a manifesto. I elaborate in more detail later in this Introduction about how the accompanying prose to my collection constitutes a ‘poetics’ which seeks to consciously inhabit a space between poetry and reflection on practice from one to the other, rather than conceiving them as separate documents.

Kac refers to his holopoems as experiments and to holopoetry as a research project. Always a restless artist seeking forms to reflect the new liberatory political climate in Brazil in the 1970s, he found himself split between experiments in performance which highlighted the body, and in the visual, which included concrete poetry and, increasingly, that which involved computer and paper-print technologies. He was, however, frustrated by the limitations of the surface of the page or screen. He wanted poetry to “jump off the page” but not as a tangible object. It was the science of holography and the distinctive qualities of holographic space “between the two-dimensional surface of the page and the solid three-dimensional form of the object” that provided a new space for visual poetry which took the form of both text and image (H, 45-60).

I refer to the poems written for *Equinoctial* between 2009 - 2016 as ‘experimental’. By this I mean that I appropriate features of language and form from other poetics, shaping / re-shaping as a result of a combination of intuitive choice and

³⁸ Ibid., Paragraph 25.

applying constraints and other interventions. My experiments are limited to the page but because they are in ekphrastic dialogue with Kac's work and 'the holographic' I frequently refer to them as 'immersive', as Kac does of his holopoems. As such, I mean that they were created by being immersed in the medium of holography. My poems, as a result of such immersion, challenge impassivity, impersonality, objectivity, surface, stasis and distance as aesthetic modes in favour of the active, the personal, subjectivity, depth, movement and interaction although I acknowledge that the pursuit of such is a vexed one

It becomes clear, in subsequent discussions of *flâneuserie*, that these characteristics are linked with striving to attain a sense of emotional resonance and agency for the female poet and a revisiting of the notion of 'quest' in doing so. As these acts of *flâneuserie* frequently take place in city settings I find useful Zöe Skoulding's ambition in attempting to define a range of women's poetry as "experimental" by making the point that she has also "aimed to explore the city itself as a space of experiment inhabited by, or paralleled in poetic practice" (EC,1).

1.3 Holographic Enquiry as Ekphrastic Enquiry

My holographic enquiry is a form of 'ekphrastic enquiry'. This is poetic enquiry which derives its ways of knowing from the visual and is essentially dialogic. In Zone Two I expand on scholarly positionings in relation to ekphrasis. This includes reflecting on my previous ekphrastic interventions (as shown in earlier collections and on my blog) and how, in these, I trace preoccupations which I have explored with more specific relation to holography here.

The proliferation of ekphrastic poetry in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is well documented in the literature, and has risen partly due to increased availability of online sources of art³⁹. David Kennedy suggests that contemporary poets go “beyond painting” in their responses to other media. This includes interactions with film and photography and with other areas of art practice such as biography and theoretical texts. The result is “a much wider range of representation or narrativisation”.⁴⁰ My model of ekphrasis is similarly broad, drawing from a range of holographic (and other) sources other than specific holopoems / holograms. Kennedy also notes that that “... female poets writing about art, and female poets writing about woman artists in particular, have attracted little critical interest.”⁴¹ I have found exceptions to this but agree that the scholastic field tends to be is gendered in such a way that women in paintings, and poems arising from them, are traditionally likely to be rendered as victim or muse, rather than ‘maker’. My ekphrastic dialogues are predicated on recognising this tendency, particularly in poems which respond to

³⁹ Key sources in the twentieth and twentieth-first century scholarship of ekphrasis are Michael Davidson, ‘Ekphrasis and the Postmodern Painter Poem,’ *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 42 (1983), Wendy Steiner, *Pictures of Romance: Form against Context in Painting and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), John Hollander, ‘The Poetics of Ekphrasis,’ *Word & Image* 4 (1988): 209, Murray Krieger, *Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992); James A.W. Heffernann, *Museum of Words: the Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), Stephen Cheeke, *Writing For Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press), 2008), Elizabeth Bergmann Loizeaux, *Twentieth-Century Poetry and the Visual Arts*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Cole Swenson, *Noise That Stays Noise* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), David Kennedy, *The Ekphrastic Encounter in Contemporary British Poetry and Elsewhere* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2012).

My working definition of ekphrasis for this project derives from Eduardo Kac’s emphasis on holopoetry as only being holopoetry if it is ‘written’ via the medium of holography; that is, being ‘immersed’ in the medium (see p.151). I refer in more detail to several of these sources and elaborate more on my ‘immersive’ ekphrasis in Zone Two.

⁴⁰ *The Ekphrastic Encounter in Contemporary British Poetry and Elsewhere* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), 71.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 71.

surrealist art; my narrative ‘persona’, Clair Obscur,⁴² the ‘Holographic Flâneuse’, opposes it through the trajectory of *Equinoctial*. The reader enters the first section of the collection via the Right Eye and ‘The Ekphrastic Museum’, and is subsequently led, via the Left Eye, ‘Through the Hologram’ by Clair Obscur, towards the final section and the condition of ‘Convergence / Glory Sky-Shell’ ahead of the discovery of the Green Apartment. In the poetry, and through the Zones of the ‘poetics’, I scrutinize what the term ‘museum’ has come to mean; how it manifests itself—in literal, digital and ideological forms—and what a contemporary poet might take from this in making new ekphrastic work.

To restate, I interpret holographic enquiry as being positioned within the wider mode of ekphrastic enquiry. The two overlap in that they are both concerned with visual ways of knowing and lend themselves to analysis of interactions that occur between poet and artwork. I have explained how the impact of seeing holograms as art prompted my first thoughts about connections between a hologram and a poem. This led to my initial searches with key words including ‘holography’ and ‘poetry’ and, to Eduardo Kac and Nicole Brossard, as primary sources. I also investigate ‘the holographic’ more broadly, in relation to its presence in other literature.

There are parallels between Eduardo Kac and Nicole Brossard as poet / artists but also evident differences. I found only one instance of their being linked despite Kac inventing holopoetry and Brossard using holographic imagery in two of her major works.⁴³ Both challenged a conservatism they found in the cultural and political landscapes of the early 1980s. Kac, as I have mentioned, is a South

⁴² It is a term used by poet Barbara Guest to describe imagination in the essay ‘Poetry the True Fiction’ in *Forces of Imagination* (Berkeley: Kelsey St. Press, 2003), 32 hereafter referred to in the text as FoI followed by page number. I discuss my use of the term further on page 138.

⁴³ Carolyn Guertin, ‘Three-Dimensional Woman: The Visual Discourses of Female Desire in Holographic Hyperfiction’, *Electronic Book Review* 7 (Summer 1998) <http://www.altx.com/ebr/ebr7/7guertin/index.html> last accessed 25th September 2016.

American artist based in Chicago working within the poetic tradition of the avant-garde. He invented “holopoetry” as “a research project” as a reaction against poetry which was “fixed”, on the page, or in 3D concrete form and to extend what new media had already achieved (H, 48).

For Brossard, a poet and novelist situated in Montréal, language was a site for exploring her linguistic heritage as a French speaker and identity as lesbian. She adopted the trope of the hologram to project an ideal of the ‘3D woman’ as lesbian—writer and reader. Her project of the integral, or ‘whole’, woman absorbs the hologram’s etymology from ‘holo -’ meaning ‘whole’. Brossard refers to her novel, *Picture Theory*, as ‘holographic’; this and her theoretical essays in *The Aerial Letter*—allowed me to forge distinct parallels, as a female poet, through the sense that her work was composed of ‘aerial letters’. Both Brossard and Kac display an energy and questing spirit as artists which I wanted to underpin my own creative production. Both had bodies of both creative and critical work I could draw on. Brossard strengthened my feminist (if not lesbian) positioning as a researcher, and developed my sense of how I would construe my ‘flâneuserie’.

I have mentioned the events that led to Professor Martin Richardson becoming my advisor for this research. Richardson is a world-renowned expert in the field of Holography and 3D-Imaging. His holographic art has been widely exhibited. In *Zone Two* I discuss the holograms he made of John Harrison’s chronometer H4, the timekeeper which solved ‘the longitude problem’. Both timekeeper and holograms are kept in the Royal Observatory, Greenwich. I also discuss Richardson’s account of the night of their making. It soon becomes clear that Greenwich is a prime site for my flâneuserie prompted by my fascination with the holograms, the Meridian laser and the topography of the district.

1.4 Flâneuserie

My visits to the Greenwich museums in February and March 2013 provoked the question, ‘Where are the women?’. These were sites of visible male achievement in seafaring and astronomy. Paintings on the wall contained male gaze after male gaze. Women were well-represented among the number of highly-painted, exaggeratedly feminine looking figureheads of ships that had been wrecked at sea. In Zone Two, I further discuss the female figureheads and how these became important in strengthening the gendered orientation of my research particularly their role in leading to the invention Clair Obscur, the Holographic Flâneuse, my counter to Charles Baudelaire’s and Walter Benjamin’s male figure of the flâneur.

I have mentioned how I find a tone of declarative certainty in relation to prose writings by Ezra Pound and Charles Olson; that possessing and deploying this, creates a distance between writer and reader. A certain ‘tone’, according to Peter Nicholls, characterizes the aesthetic and social stance of the figure of the ‘flâneur’ as represented by Baudelaire in *The Painter of Modern Life* (1859-60). The famous essay is nominally about the painter Constantin Guys, but actually an occasion for a series of meditations on the theme of modernity.⁴⁴ Nicholls traces this back to a poem of 1845-6, ‘To a Red-haired Beggar Girl’, in which Baudelaire writes a tribute to a girl he saw when visiting the Champs-Élysées in Paris. Baudelaire praises the girl in terms of the ‘courtly’ convention, “You wear your heavy clogs more regally than a / queen from a romance her velvet buskins”⁴⁵ offsetting his own poverty against this, saying that he cannot afford to give her finery and praising her natural beauty. Nicholls notes, though, that the praise of nature in the poem, and the assumed

⁴⁴ *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 5.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

equivalence of status, is ambiguous, and that “while the poet claims to abolish the social distance between himself and the girl, he actually replaces it with another which is primarily aesthetic”.⁴⁶ There are two voices at work in the poem, one which sympathises with and has admiration for the girl and another which distances and objectifies voyeuristically simply taking her as an occasion for a poem.⁴⁷

This distance is an ironic one and operates at the level of tone; the poet is absent from his words and the text says the opposite of what it seems to say.⁴⁸ The further suggestion from this is that the girl is nothing without the artifice of the poem to commemorate her.⁴⁹ Nicholls’s point is that this is a seminal moment in the history of modernist poetry. The male gaze is a privileged one and the poem, a gendered construct to keep the woman as ‘other’, feeding into “the various conventional fantasies of Woman as ‘dangerous’ and overpowering ... suggesting that aesthetic form and ironic tone are necessary defences against the other.”⁵⁰ The implications are that, despite immersing himself into the crowd, the flâneur / poet protects himself from otherness by maintaining an ironic stance which preserves “a closed model of self” yet maintains a privileged roving gaze.⁵¹ There are versions of this ‘othering’ that spill over when male poets write about women in paintings; and when male painters put women into paintings.⁵² My poems relating to surrealism in ‘The

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 4.

⁵¹ Ibid., 4.

⁵² I discuss this further in Zone Two.

Ekphrastic Museum', the first section of *Equinoctial*, engage with and interrogate this tendency.

Feminist critics considering constructions of the flâneur have debated whether or not a female equivalent is possible. For Griselda Pollock, "the flâneur embodies the gaze of modernity which is both covetous and erotic";⁵³ even though he remains separate, his gaze is "controlling" making him a "consumer" of sights⁵⁴. He is a representative of what, according to Pollock, was a "public sphere, defined as a world of productive labour, political decision, government, education, the law and public service" which had become "exclusive to men".⁵⁵ "Woman", on the other hand, was defined by "the private sphere ... home, wives, children and servants", a "non-space of sentiment and duty from which money and power were banned".⁵⁶

Janet Wolff concurs that "the flâneur, the central figure of modernity was inherently gendered male"⁵⁷ and that any account of urban experience seen through his eyes, "instantly renders woman invisible or marginal".⁵⁸ To walk the streets, for women, in the nineteenth century, was to be a *streetwalker*, a prostitute, "the central female trope in the discourse of modernity."⁵⁹ Wolff's central argument is that because of "the actual constraints, exclusions, and dangers faced by women in the

⁵³ *Vision and Difference: Feminism, femininity and the histories of art* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 94.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁵⁷ 'Gender and the haunting of cities (or, the retirement of the *flâneur*)', in Aruna D'Souza & Tom McDonough, eds., *The invisible flâneuse?: Gender, public space, and visual culture in nineteenth-century Paris* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 19.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

urban environment ... the role of the flâneuse remained impossible”⁶⁰ Her suggestion is to by-pass ‘those ideologies and narratives of women’s place’ which surround sociological constructions of the flâneur. Rather, as Elizabeth Wilson suggests, give consideration to the “ ‘multidimensional and contradictory manifestations’ ”⁶¹ of the modern, which have always given space to women who “ ‘have survived and flourished in the interstices of the city, negotiating the contradictions of the city in their own particular way.’ ”⁶² This brings to mind Nicole Brossard’s “urban radicals” who “cross cities and myths” and whose conception of reality is bound up with how they envisage themselves, and in the process of becoming those selves (AL, 80). There is agency, not passivity, in embracing writing and reading practices that transcend what has been prescribed for them:

The patriarchal universe has us all accustomed to exercising our faculties in linear fashion. Our reading of reality is conditioned throughout by the patriarchal tradition which itself constitutes reality. Our senses are trained to perceive reality through what is useful to its reproduction. Urban radicals unsettle the senses, thereby being driven to a relentless exploration of sense.

(AL, 81)

The term “patriarchal” recalls discourses of second-wave feminism. Urban radicals, who “invent fictions which mirror them infinitely, like two and some thousand different raindrops” (AL, 81) bring to mind the plurality of third-wave feminisms. Clair Obscur is borne from the possibilities of plurality of ways for

⁶⁰ Ibid., 21.

⁶¹ ‘The Invisible *Flâneur*’, *New Left Review*, no. 191, (January-February 1992), 109, quoted by Wolff, 25.

⁶² *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 8, quoted by Wolff, 25.

woman in how they negotiate their reality in the world and in reading and writing practices.

Elizabeth Wilson further argues that “the turbulent industrial city” is a labyrinthine “transgressive space”⁶³, and as such, the space where the flâneur “effaces himself, becomes passive, feminine”⁶⁴, and via “the writing of fragmentary pieces, he makes himself a blank page upon which the city writes itself ... it is the flâneur, not the flâneuse who is invisible.”⁶⁵ Wilson argues that attaching too much weight to “feminist accounts” that “overemphasize the passivity and victimization of women” can lead to losing sight of “women’s own resistance to, and reworkings of, these systems of thought.”⁶⁶

This latter interpretation renders the existence of the flâneuse as a further act of invisibility and negation. In holographic terms, the label occludes the agency of the woman. Nichols’s reading of Baudelaire’s poem suggested a complicated stance to modernism; that the distancing of the poet using an ironic tone was at once an act of self-preservation from the threats of modern life for the flâneur / voyeur as much as it was an act of guaranteeing the ‘otherness’ of the beggar-girl and ‘possessing’ her by means of the all-seeing masculine gaze. To ascribe feminine characteristics to the flâneur dilutes the gender politics which have not gone away if the writings in the twentieth and twenty first centuries by Nicole Brossard, Rachel Blau Du Plessis and Griselda Pollock are to be believed.

⁶³ D’ Souza & McDonough, *Invisible Flâneuse?*, 12.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Zöe Skoulding (2013) provides the most recent discussion of flâneur / flâneuse for this research⁶⁷. Skoulding cites Deborah Parsons (2000),⁶⁸ who, like Elizabeth Wilson, emphasizes the contradictory nature of the figure of flâneur interlinking such contradictions with “ ‘themes of modernity, spectacle, and gender, implying as instability in his sense of superior masculine authority.’ ”⁶⁹ Parsons notes that:

Whereas Benjamin’s *flâneur* increasingly becomes a metaphor for observation, retreating from the city streets once the arcades are destroyed, to a place of scopic authority yet static detachment, women were entering the city with a fresh eye, observing it from within. It is with this social influx of women as empirical observers into the city street that aesthetic, urban perception as a specifically masculine phenomenon and privilege is challenged.⁷⁰

Michel de Certeau’s view of the walker who mediates between a panoramic view from a high building and a view from ground level demonstrates “ ‘fluid and multiple perspectives on postmodern urban space.’ ”⁷¹ Skoulding puts forward the view that:

Considering the flâneur as transcending its historical moment, in being both masculine and feminine, stationary and static, authoritative and displaced, is helpful in avoiding a reduction of gendered spatial perspectives to simplified oppositions.⁷²

With this conception in mind, Skoulding prefers to adopt the term ‘flâneur’ rather than the more specific ‘flâneuse’ in her discussions of women’s poetry and urban space to avoid what she sees as reductive gendering (EC, 9). I take the view that

⁶⁷ Even more recent is Lauren Elkin, *Flâneuse-Women walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice and London* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2016) but it was too late for me to include it here.

⁶⁸ *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 6., in Skoulding, *Experimental Cities*, 9.

⁶⁹ Parsons, *Streetwalking*, 9., in Skoulding, *Experimental Cities*, 8.

⁷⁰ Parsons, *Streetwalking*, 6., Skoulding, *Experimental Cities*, 9.

⁷¹ *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 91-110, in Skoulding, *Experimental Cities*, 9.

‘flâneur’ is inextricably loaded with connotations of masculine privilege and authority which render women as ‘other’ and so have preferred to deliberately embrace the gendered feminine in adopting the term ‘flâneuse’ as counter to the claims of her non-existence or invisibility.

I have situated my poetry written in dialogue with holography within the ekphrastic mode of writing, which is, as I have already stated, my original contribution to knowledge and fills a gap in the scholarship of ekphrasis.

‘Flâneuserie’ is another original contribution; as an invented methodology and comprising a gendered poetics. It wilfully embraces the feminine opposite of ‘the flâneur’ and ways of working that privilege direct experiences of women artists and researchers. My flâneuserie as poetics extrapolates from the poetry, and vice versa, and derives mostly from poetry and prose of women writers who particularly ‘speak’ to this project, as feminists and as artists and researchers. Besides the works of Brossard, the poetry and essays of cultural theorist, Rachel Blau DuPlessis; the poetry and essays of New York School poet, Barbara Guest, the poetry and essays of Denise Riley, and the essays of art historian Griselda Pollock have been particularly influential.

Traditionally, a creative writing PhD involves a creative artifact (in my case, a poetry collection) and a critical and reflective commentary: two distinct and separate pieces of writing. Making an entire separation between between creative and critical components did not seem appropriate for a project which foregrounded the experimental and was a ‘testing-ground’ for new writing deriving from holography. Rachel Blau DuPlessis and Nicole Brossard discuss ways they have found of ‘writing back’ against a tradition which privileges male authority in form and voice. In the essay ‘The Pink Guitar’, DuPlessis, writing about Wallace Stevens’s poem, ‘The Blue Guitar’, detects a kind of confident certainty in male discourse:

The man, he said, plays a transformative blue guitar.
He bespeaks his difference in a flat, factual and
authoritative tone. 'Things as they are/ Are changed
upon the blue guitar' ...⁷³

In further stating that "A pink guitar upsets balances" (PG, 160), DuPlessis signals a certain type of women's writing which counters this and which is represented in her ideas about the essay form:

Essay is the play of speculation. The test of the essay is whether it opens a space for the reader, rather than closing one ... Writing an essay comes from curiosity and need – the need to examine opinions and contradictions, and to integrate cultural materials.

(BS, 33-36)

DuPlessis's essay, 'For the Etruscans', is a model of 'the speculative' combining elements of stream of consciousness commentary and questionings with quotations from other women writers and reflective statements.

Exploration not in the service of reconciling self to world, but creating a new world for a new self given our revolutionary desire (that feeling of infinite possibility) for a nonpatriarchal order, in the symbolic realm and in the realms of productive, personal, and political relations.

(PG, 19)

In both *Blue Studios* and *The Pink Guitar* DuPlessis wants to "help re-envision the 'poetic' as genuinely critical and rejecting of gender reductiveness (BS, 5)". Nicole Brossard embraces 'the poetic' too in the twelve 'texts' that comprise the *The Aerial Letter*. Each theoretical text is juxtaposed with a passage from the poetry or fiction she was writing at the time; as Louise H. Forsyth explains, "The theoretical text illuminates the entire creative work, while the creative work, which still continues on

⁷³ *The Pink Guitar: Writing as Feminist Practice* (New York; Routledge, 1990), 160 hereafter referred to in the text as PG followed by page number.

its independent career, is actually what makes the spirit of the theory manifest.”⁷⁴

Like DuPlessis, Brossard seeks to counter dominant modes of writing which render women invisible. In ‘Otherhow’, an essay on poetry and gender, DuPlessis is explicit in how a woman writer might produce meaningful work, and writes in italics, as a kind of signature at the end of the essay “*A poetics gives permission to continue.* (PG, 156)”. This statement, in particular, has influenced my decision to construe the accompanying writing to the poetry as ‘poetics’, the knowledge produced –in the poetry and poetics- having grown in the shifts between the creating and reflecting modes. This has always been true when I have considered various drafts of poems, but separately, in drafts of academic prose, but it was only in embarking upon this research that I realized that both creative and academic work comprised new knowledge and each fed into and ‘nourished’ the other. A poetics helps me address some of the formal challenges in bringing together the poetry and critical prose and evidences ongoing reflection on practice.

I have isolated three particular statements from the list of statements on poetics by Robert Sheppard:

Poetics are the products of the process of reflection upon writings, and upon the act of writing, gathering from the past and from others, speculatively cast into the future ...

Poetics offer generative schema. ...

When poetics stops it becomes theory, retrospective rather than speculative, definitive, rather than open to infinitude ...⁷⁵

A combination of these three statements places emphasis on my poetry and writing upon it as ‘experimental’; any parts of the whole, or the whole, being offered as

⁷⁴ Introduction, *The Aerial Letter*, trans., Marlene Wildman (Toronto: The Women’s Press, 1988), 13.

⁷⁵ ‘The Necessity of Poetics’, 1999, 1- 4.
<http://www.pores.bbk.ac.uk/1/Robert%20Sheppard,%20The%20Necessity%20of%20Poetics'.htm> last accessed 25th September 2016.

material for generating new work in the future whether my own, or that of another poet / artist / researcher.

I have mentioned that central to my flâneuserie, as a ‘character’ who orientates the reader through the collection and as a conceptual model providing a link between poetry and poetics, is my invented ‘Holographic Flâneuse’, Clair Obscur. Her name derives from two premises: Barbara Guest’s association of the French term, “clair-obscur” (“obscure light ... the mysterious side of thought” (FoI, 32)) with the imagination and the name of Nicole Brossard’s central character in *Picture Theory*, (her “holographic” novel), Claire Dérive, with its suggestions of light and drifting. The associations raised by the conflation of the two names are meant to conjure the elusiveness of ‘the hologram’ itself and, at the same time, the grasping for meaning implicit in poetry and in my grasping for forms for my poems, and for the thesis as a whole. Clair has other functions; she is a device by which I have manipulated ‘stances’ in the poetry; effected shifts of positioning within the poems as to whether I am in them as poet or not. Clair is not my ‘alter ego’ as such but a ‘persona’, rather, whereby I have operated a ‘slippage’ of selves from poem to poem; at times, she and I are separate, and at others, as one. In experimenting on the place of ‘self’ in the poems I am drawing attention to ongoing discussions of such, particularly among women poets who, as DuPlessis and Brossard acknowledge, are always under closer scrutiny about such matters than men.

I have already referred to inherent tensions in bringing in the personal and emotional with attendant dynamisms and the quest to manipulate form. I have suggested that in grasping at form I have created something ungraspable in the character of Clair. I have referred to her as both character and model implying both the fictional and the functional; also the personal in suggesting that, at times, she and I are one. I want the reader to bear all these possibilities in mind simultaneously when

reading *Equinoctial*. There is a deliberate buried narrative in the structuring of the three sections. The rudimentary quest begins (viewed by the Right Eye) in The Ekphrastic Museum of surrealism where women, proto-Clairs, prevail as muses and where frames are there to be broken out of and where two dimensions grasps at three dimensions. It proceeds (via the Left Eye) to the ‘birth’ of Clair, where I (and the reader) am taken on a journey ‘Through the Hologram’ and via its potentiating, self-actualising properties, become ‘figurehead’ in a quest to reach the Green Apartment, a charged, holographic equivalent of Virginia Woolf’s ‘A Room of One’s Own’; contemporary equivalent of the meditative green spaces beloved of certain male Renaissance lyric poets. The final section ‘Convergence / Glory Sky-Shell’ demonstrates no easy convergence of the other two: Clair has left and has urged me and the reader, to ‘watch’ the other two sections at the same time; to inhabit the condition in-between.

Clair Obscur, in representing creative imagination, transcends any one historical moment in *Equinoctial*. Her journeying is different from a switch of perspective from overview to ground-level view, which according to De Certeau, is a switch between the theoretical and practical; rather she watches both perspectives at the same time. This offers what Eduardo Kac refers, in his theory of holopoetry, as a binocular reading providing also a model for the relationship between the poetry and prose components of this thesis and the recommended approach that they should be ‘watched’ at the same time to grasp the ‘poetics’ which oscillates between the two.

Flâneuserie, then, encompasses methods by which a women poet / researcher ‘navigates’ that area of study. In its openness to a range of creative and scholarly practices, flâneuserie has connections with “bricolage” as a working method; a term that arises from Claude Levi-Strauss’s description of the “bricoleur” as someone who ‘is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks “making do

with ‘whatever is at hand’.⁷⁶ Flâneuserie is a revised version which absorbs bricolage activities as creative acts, such as, in my case, collages of some of the poems, using colour to help write in particular forms, using postcards and / or other images as additional prompts. Related practices —travelling, walking, visiting museums, galleries, reading, note-taking, drafting / re-drafting in journals, daydreaming, reflecting, talking, workshopping—are familiar ones for a poet gathering and garnering material, here contributing to a specifically gendered methodology.

1.5 The Structure of the Thesis

I have mentioned that this practice-led thesis comprises a poetry collection, *Equinoctial*, and accompanying critical and reflective prose which I refer to as my ‘poetics’. I have also mentioned how my interest in holopoetry prompted me towards experimentation in the structuring of this thesis in ways which connect with its contexts.

Equinoctial begins with a Preface which advises about a way of ‘reading’ the collection. It is broadly divided into three parts, with main headings ‘Right Eye’, ‘Left Eye’, and ‘Convergence’. Each heading alerts the viewer / reader to the emphases of poems in each section as denoted by sub-headings for groups of poems, ‘The Ekphrastic Museum’ ‘Through the Hologram’ and ‘Glory Sky-Shell’. As I have mentioned, I encourage Kac’s idea of ‘binocular reading’ of a holopoem where each eye receives different input, something which is manipulated in the making of the poem ways in which I want a reader to experience my poems. The sections represent different modes of female experience, both inhibiting and liberatory. The hologram is a means of moving the former to the latter to an eventual state of ‘Convergence’ in the poems in the third section. Furthermore, I have referred to the trajectory as a kind

⁷⁶ *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 17.

of quest narrative involving Clair Obscur as guide. I intend this to provide the reader with means of navigation, as it did me in organizing the collection and in developing an overarching structure for poetry and prose in the thesis, and articulating the connections between them.

The usual division of parts of a PhD is into chapters. There are exceptions to this with practice-led PhDs but I found none which particularly suited my purpose as a model. I began by using chapters but the final form arose organically from my grappling with the research questions and their overlapping contexts; common to these contexts was the word ‘zone’ so providing a rationale for me to use it as a structuring device for the prose sections. One definition of ‘zone’ is as “an area or stretch of land having a particular characteristic, purpose, or use, or subject to particular restrictions.”⁷⁷ Such a definition is useful here as each of the three ‘zones’ of my research, Ekphrasis, Holography and Flâneuserie, has a distinctive subject and purpose and, as I have already stated, inherent in each are tensions between artistic freedom and control. To ‘be in the zone’, a state of creative flow, is a condition which is often elusive; it certainly was for me at times in completing this project. I wanted my use of the word here to resonate with that condition which for a writer / researcher –more so, a female writer / researcher-can be hard won.

My research has a backdrop of modernist experimentation particularly in cross-overs between art and poetry. Apollinaire’s poem ‘Zone’⁷⁸ was a result of experimentation with collage technique – testimony to his involvement in world of Cubist art and as ‘flâneur’, in capturing fragments of conversation in notebooks; employing loose long lines and shifting pronominals that denoted a

⁷⁷ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/zone> last accessed 25th September 2016.

restless wandering through days, places, time-zones.⁷⁹ In writing about modernist conceptions of space, Ian Davidson, points out that collage is a visual example of what historian and critic Walter Benjamin referred to as a ‘ “monad” ’, this being “ ‘time filled by the presence of the now” ’,⁸⁰ in revealing new relationships between elements of the past and to highlight “ the way narratives of continuity conceal political, economic and social structures of control.”⁸¹ Benjamin referred to his *The Arcades Project* in a letter of 1930 as “ ‘the theater of all my struggles and all my ideas’ ”.⁸² I re-interpret “theatre” as the ‘zone’ which encompassed Benjamin’s research-project into the political, social and economic history of Paris and for which his socio-political orientation impelled him to find a use for collage as an investigative method and as a compositional device in order to present that history, as “ ‘dialectic’ ”: a “... philosophic display of distances, transitions and intersections ... perpetually shifting contexts and ironic juxtapositions.”⁸³ Benjamin drew attention to how rationale and linear narratives of events ways obfuscated more contingent ways of knowing. I have taken the idea of contingency forward into the design of *Equinoctial*: within the narrative arc of the three sections, via the hologram, the poems open out into dialogic interconnection.

Of the flâneur’s mode of inhabiting of the urban ‘zone’, Benjamin writes in *The Arcades Project*:

⁷⁹ David Lehman, ‘VQR Online’, Spring 2013, <http://www.vqronline.org/translations/apollinaires-zone> last accessed 25th September 2016.

⁸⁰ *Ideas of Space in Contemporary Poetry* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 6.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸² Introduction. Trans. by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Massachusetts / London: Harvard University Press, 1999), x.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, xi.

the ‘colportage phenomenon of space’ is the flâneur’s basic experience ... Thanks to this phenomenon, everything potentially taking place in this one single room is perceived simultaneously.⁸⁴

This simultaneity of perceiving from different viewpoints within a specific ‘zone’ recalls points made earlier about Cubist challenges to fixed perspectives, and those enacted by Apollinaire in his poem, ‘Zone’. Davidson details Cubist techniques and the intersecting of collage:

The two main approaches to Cubism, the earlier ‘abstract’ Cubism in which the subject was fragmented into its constituent parts, and the later ‘synthetic’ Cubism in which the image was constructed out of pre-existing elements or objects, was bridged by collage, which simultaneously introduced into cubist paintings something of the ‘real’ world through its use of found materials ...⁸⁵

In my poetic practice I have appropriated features of holograms and holopoetry, for example, highlighting the relationship of constituent parts of a poem in relation to the whole and using collage techniques to do so. However, it is the passage “through the hologram” which shifts the multi-directional perspective from two-dimensions into three, then four dimensions. This denotes a shift from ‘flâneurie’ to ‘flâneuserie’ and an expansion of the concept of ‘zone’ by which women are subjugated, by whatever represents the licence of the ‘male gaze’.

Eduardo Kac’s and Nicole Brossard’s interpretations of ‘zone’ are particularly relevant to my preoccupations. Eduardo Kac built “viewing-zones” into his holopoems as a conscious compositional strategy:

... instead of creating compositions that remain fixed on the surface of the page or the film or that remain stationary as a three-dimensional volume, I break that space in different ways ... I break that space into zones in such a way *that you can never have the full gestalt or the full view of the poem at once*. It’s totally

⁸⁴ Ibid., 418.

⁸⁵ Davidson, *Ideas of Space*, 7.

broken into different viewing zones that ask you to navigate in that space, oscillate with the poem, and create your own reading. So there is this breaking down, this collapsing of the two-dimensional, stable surface which physically makes my writing possible.

(H, 88)

The italicized words signal how this conception of zone differs from that of Benjamin or Apollinaire in that it does not pretend a totality of perspective. Each person viewing the holopoem will ‘read’ it differently. There is no simultaneous ‘multi-perspective’ or ‘overview’ to be had; the act of reading the holopoem is to be aware that holographic space represents the collapsing of any representation of stability as two-dimensional, or even three-dimensional, ‘surfaces’ may suggest.

Even when ‘re-presenting’ reality via the materials and techniques of the age in a bid to denote ‘freedom’ (breadth of movement and vision, in literal and non-literal ways) there is a paradox: the artist, like a museum curator, is engaged in overt acts of control over compositional decisions. Eduardo Kac does not attempt to present an illusion of coherence in his holopoems. However, in shifting the “spatio-temporal” zone, from two to four-dimensions, and allowing for individual interpretations of each holopoem, Kac is in control of what the viewer sees through the viewing-zones (H, 72).

Nicole Brossard construes the word ‘zone’ more as a space of “imaginative” possibility, further delineated as a space for women writers. Like Kac, her project is with language; specifically, how women can inhabit language under the particular ‘viewing conditions’ of ‘the aerial letter’, a ‘critical space’ for women’s writing and a precursor of ‘aerial vision’, connected here with the ‘convergent’ vision I bring to the poems in the final section of *Equinoctial*. According to Brossard, under the influence of the aerial vision:

... certain zones known for their redundant opaque clarity cloud over; others become nuanced or illuminated. Thus, at the heart of the aerial letter, certain zones appear clear, zones we would otherwise register with difficulty, given the political vision we have of beings and the activities they participate in.

(AL, 85)

Such vision accompanies a ‘new dawn’ for women, “At dawn, our spirit is extravagant; it wanders freely in forbidden zones and we have no choice but to explore them” (AL, 85). Brossard’s “vision” challenges patriarchal dominance in writing and reading practices, “the screen which stands in the way of women’s energy, identity and creativity” (AL, 81). If Kac provides the means of receiving the language of holopoetry via literal ‘viewing zones’, Brossard’s zones provide a visionary means for women to inhabit three-dimensions, to find ‘convergence’, as women and writers. I take this to mean to be writing in modes which embrace the personal and critical and which reflect a woman’s ‘erotic’ being, however this might manifest itself.

Green holographic spaces, in the context of my project, are both literal and mental spaces conducive to feminized creative practice; they are accessed and potentiated by acts of *flâneuserie*. Holography (and initially, more specifically, Eduardo Kac’s holopoetry) provided me with a specific language and knowledge relating to processes that bridge art and science. The bridge metaphor is conducive to the ‘crossings and recrossings’ (my words) of my investigations in this practice-led research, including theoretical and practical works relating to holography, art and poetry. I recognised that, at times, poems were meta-narratives on process; sometimes partly intended, at others, unintentional but recognised upon reflection. Whatever the means, as I proceeded with my project it became fitting to present the poetry as a field of enquiry and a type of research that departs from conventional quantitative / qualitative paradigms.

Zone Two: Assemblage

Ekphrasis, Holography, and Flaneuserie

2.0 Overview

In this Zone I give further background to each of my three research areas (Ekphrasis, Holography, and Flâneuserie) and their intersections. The Zone is titled ‘Assemblage’ to draw attention to twentieth-century art practice which denotes an impulse to reach beyond the space of the flat canvas surface (2D) to the three-dimensional.

Kurt Schwitters defines his assemblage practice, Merz, in 1919:

The word Merz denotes essentially the combination of all conceivable materials for artistic purposes, and technically the principle of equal evaluation of the individual materials ... A perambulator wheel, wire-netting, string and cotton wool are factors having equal rights with paint. The artist creates through the choice, distribution and metamorphosis of the materials.⁸⁶

My thesis, then, is an act of assemblage selecting a combination of ‘materials’ to make an appropriate structure for presenting overlapping contextual areas of the research and creating new knowledge as a result.

2.1 Ekphrasis: My Contexts

I contextualize my ekphrastic dialogues with holography / holopoetry within the context of my previous ekphrastic work and the scholarly literature dedicated to ekphrasis. For my study, I refer mostly to poetry of the twentieth and twenty-first century and to ekphrastic poems written by women although there are exceptions in both cases. I use the terms ‘ekphrastic dialogues’ or ‘interventions’ to describe poetic responses to the visual which are interactive acts of engagement which extend beyond the merely descriptive, and the term ‘ekphrastic procedures’ refers to chosen techniques.

⁸⁶ Emma Chambers and Karen Orchard, eds. *Schwitters in Britain* (London: Tate Publishing, 2013), 6.

‘Ekphrasis’ is a literary mode which traditionally denotes writing which responds to ‘the visual’, mostly to paintings; more broadly it has come to represent written reinterpretations of other artforms e.g. music, film. It literally derives from the Greek words *ek* (out) and *phrazein* (tell, declare, pronounce) from an original meaning, ‘telling in full’.⁸⁷ This derivation has an interesting parallel with the roots of the word ‘hologram’, and its connotations of ‘wholeness’. James A. W. Heffernan’s definition of ekphrasis is that it is “the verbal representation of visual representation.”⁸⁸ This is the most widely cited definition in the literature of ekphrasis.⁸⁹ Heffernan’s definition excludes what he refers to as “pictorialism” where a written work “generates in language effects similar to those created in pictures” and uses “pictorial techniques”. These might include “focusing, framing, scanning and iconicity” for instance, the “visual iconicity of the pattern poem”, where there is “a visible resemblance between the arrangement of words or letters on a page and what they signify.”⁹⁰ I prefer a wider definition of ekphrasis than Heffernan’s; one which embraces both “pictorialism” and “iconicism” as he describes them here, as befits poetry written in response to holopoems which function as both “written” text and image.

Besides its representational tendency, ekphrastic poetry, according to Heffernan, is “paragonal” in that it involves a “contest” or “struggle” between word and image, and is also “powerfully gendered”.⁹¹ Ekphrasis, he argues, “evokes the

⁸⁷ *Museum of Words: the Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 191.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸⁹ *Museum of Words* elicited the most citations for a work on ‘ekphrasis’ in a search via Google Scholar. 16th August 2016. See reference to other key sources of the scholarship of ekphrasis in the footnote on p. 127.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

power of the silent image (*female*) even as it subjects that power to the rival authority of language (*male*).”⁹² Heffernan believes that, “In talking back to and looking back at the male viewer, the images envoiced by ekphrasis challenge at once the controlling authority of the male gaze and the power of the male word”,⁹³ even, presumably, when the poems are written by men. Wendy Steiner refers to ekphrasis in equally gendered terms when she defines it as the “ ‘pregnant’ ” moment in art⁹⁴ implying that the painting has the capacity to ‘still’ the poem. Heffernan, following on from Steiner, extends the metaphor in refuting the claim behind it: “... ekphrasis is dynamic and obstetric; it typically delivers *from* the pregnant moment of visual arts its embryonically narrative impulse ...”⁹⁵

Heffernan’s cited example are poems by male poets and this is not an unusual practice in the literature of ekphrasis. ‘Talking back’ in as a female persona through a poem written by a male poet is no guarantee to a female challenge to the ‘authority’ of the male word as the appropriation of a woman’s voice by a male poet serves to occlude and control. The prose used by Heffernan, and Steiner to describe ekphrastic poems employs gendered metaphors of pregnancy and giving birth; ekphrasis, in being dynamic and obstetric, is a male midwife seizing the nascent creative source of the image for his own poetic practice. I focus on the metaphor to draw attention to its reversal in *Equinoctial*, when, towards the end of the first section, ‘Right Eye / The Ekphrastic Museum’, Clair is ‘birthed’ out of surrealism; a ‘muse’ stepping out of the frame to counter the prohibitive masculine practices that would keep her there. To

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 7.

⁹⁴ *Pictures of Romance: Form against Context in Painting and Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 13-14 in Heffernan, *Museum of Words*, 5.

⁹⁵ Heffernan, *Museum of Words*, 5.

greater or lesser degrees the features of ekphrasis identified by Heffernan recur in the critical heritage of ekphrastic scholarship.⁹⁶

In the essay, ‘To Writewithize’, poet and critic Cole Swenson’s view of ekphrasis that is less that of the traditional idea of a contest but as “a side-by-side, a walking along-*with*”, where “the poem and artwork are presumed to be going in the same direction and at the same speed” as “... fellow travelers sharing a context” with “... no single, sovereign position.”⁹⁷ Swenson’s definition has proved useful in positioning my own ideas, as has Kac’s emphasis on holopoetry as only *being* holopoetry if it is ‘written’ via the medium of holography; that is, being ‘immersed’ in the medium. According to Kac, a poem that is conceived as a poem by any other means *before* it is recorded holographically is not a holopoem. Having “no single, sovereign position” as poet in relation to ‘art’ suits my purposes here, as does referring to my ekphrastic interventions as ‘immersive’: extracting what is useful from holography in general, as well as from Eduardo Kac’s and Martin Richardson’s holographic works, in particular.⁹⁸

2.2 The Ekphrastic ‘Museum’ as Research Practice

‘The Ekphrastic Museum’ is the title of the first section of poems in *Equinoctial*. Key ekphrastic dialogues here explore contradictory attitudes to women inherent in the surrealist movement.⁹⁹ “The museum”, in actual and virtual forms, represents not just an individual building but social and cultural practices surrounding it; likewise, my reference to ‘the hologram’ in this research denotes the object itself, the processes

⁹⁶ See footnote on p. 127 which refers to other key sources.

⁹⁷ *Noise That Stays Noise* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), 70.

⁹⁹ I discuss in more detail in Zone Three.

of hologram-making and its presence as socio-cultural and literary trope. The title of Heffernan's seminal text draws attention to the fact that the museum, in the twentieth-century, increasingly became a "museum of words as well as pictures":

Picture titles are merely the first of the words we *encounter* along with the pictures we see in museums. From titles we move to curatorial notes on the museum wall, to catalogue entries, to exhibition reviews, to the explanatory notes ... and to the pages of art history. Synechdochically, the museum signifies all the institutions that select, circulate, reproduce, display and explain works of visual art, all the institutions that regulate our experiences of it—largely by putting it into words.¹⁰⁰

It has always been the case that museum curatorial practices will dictate what is on display and what is hidden from the public. This continues to be so with the increased digitalization of artefacts in the twenty-first century. Fiona Campbell and Sarah Kennerdine emphasise the consequences of such practices:

If the new technologies promise to enhance and valuably complicate the archiving, preservation, and display of cultures, they also may strengthen and extend embedded forms of ideological appropriation and control.¹⁰¹

Such "forms of ideological appropriation and control" have traditionally excluded or occluded women in the museum; similar practices (*pace* modernism) have traditionally excluded or occluded women in poetry.

Of material and ideological distinctions perpetuated between men and women in society, Rachel Blau DuPlessis writes:

... it is the task of feminist-inspired gender critique in the cultural field to understand the impact of these ... differences and inequalities on the production, dissemination, reception and continuance of artists and their texts.

(PG, 51)

¹⁰⁰ Heffernan, *Museum of Words*, 139.

¹⁰¹ Fiona Cameron and Sarah Kenderdine, eds., *Theorizing Digital Cultural Heritage: A Critical Discourse* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007), x.

To aspire towards such an understanding is to begin to effect a shift away from woman as ‘muse’ to that of woman as ‘agent’ and equal participant in ‘speculative’ discourses as befits the form / s such agency takes. Similar thinking underlies Nicole Brossard’s conception of ‘aerial vision’ in *The Aerial Letter*; and art-historian Griselda Pollock’s conception of a museum which is virtual by means of its ideologically feminist orientation, being:

... about potentialities (and possibilities) to which we aspire but which can be conceptually projected as a means of causing actual changes in the way we think and understand ourselves.¹⁰²

‘Flâneuserie’, and the ‘passages’ of The Holographic Flâneuse’ through the hologram’ offer an opportunity for giving a new gender-inflected ‘dimensionality’ to the spaces of ‘the museum’.

2.3 Pre-*Equinoctial*: Previous Ekphrastic Practice

A high proportion of my poetry, unpublished and published, written prior to *Equinoctial* is ekphrastic poetry. The online ‘museum’ of various web-sites has been invaluable for this research. Without online sources I would not have been able to access Eduardo Kac’s holopoems, even in their inferior 2D versions. In this light, I define my poetry blog, *Heckle*,¹⁰³ as an online ekphrastic museum and my collection, *The Japan Quiz*,¹⁰⁴ contains ekphrastic poems which have their origin in actual and digital conceptions of the museum. *Heckle* was begun in 2008 as a National Poetry Writing Month (or ‘NatPoWriMo’)¹⁰⁵ write a poem a day for April initiative. I

¹⁰² *Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum: Time, space and the archive* (London / New York: Routledge, 2007), 15.

¹⁰³ See link on page 120.

¹⁰⁴ (Redbeck Press, 2008).

¹⁰⁵ This is taken from my blog and explains the name: ‘My name is Pam Thompson. I’m a lecturer and a freelance poet and I live in Leicester in the East Midlands, UK. My blog’s called ‘Heckle’ because I

continued this for three years-although did not necessarily post every day. I gave myself an extra constraint, in that each poem should be accompanied by an image. A randomly chosen image prompted the writing of a poem, or an image was chosen after the poem was written; a reverse ekphrasis. Some of these images came from online sources and others were my own photographs. The highly visual appearance of the blog was unsurprising following on from a long-standing interest in art and from studying History of Art as part of my first degree. Reflecting on this now, I recognize this self-imposed constraint as an ekphrastic one and that the pressures and involved in writing a poem a day were particularly generative for my practice; indeed, the use of constraints has been useful for my poems in this thesis. There was no time, nor was it necessary, to re-draft poems to any finished state. Working intensively under such conditions provided a source of rich material, some of which I have brought into *Equinoctial*. If a poem was eventually published, I removed the draft from the blog. *The Japan Quiz*, parallel to the blog, contains poems that were ‘finished’ *at that time*. Although I consider all poems to be only versions, open to revision as a result of subsequent insights, dialogues and exposures to other poetries and poetics. Paradoxically, the blog’s name, *Heckle*, denotes ‘voice’ (‘to call out’) rather than anything to do with ‘image’ but, again, retrospectively, I recognize that such a ‘calling out’ is also a ‘calling back’ to ‘art’ and what is found there; and that it links with the original meaning of ekphrasis i.e. ‘telling in full’.

thought it would be a good working title for a collection and I’ve decided also that it’s time to update it. ‘heckle’-to shout at, answer back ‘heckle’-to comb out knots in flax. Arguably, both of the above definitions have some bearing on writing poems; poems as answers back, retorts; poems as attempted reckonings with ‘knots’ of thoughts and emotions in language. I began this blog in April 2008 as a means of writing a poem a day for a month, and I did it again in April 2009, on other occasions but sometimes more sporadically. It was important for me to find an image to accompany each poem. Looking back, the poems form emotional journeys and the blogging process was a useful one by which to chart these.

I found visual blog precedents helpful, for instance the practices of poets Pascale Petit¹⁰⁶ and Tamar Yoseloff¹⁰⁷ whose web-based ekphrastic poetry, and writings on it, dovetail with their page-based collections. Petit's web-site and blog contains poems and contextual background for her collection, *What the Water Gave Me* (2010),¹⁰⁸ poems in the voice of the Mexican painter, Frida Kahlo. Yoseloff's *tumblr* site has a similar purpose in linking images and poetry and features poems arising from exchanges with different art/writing communities. Her poem, 'The Red Hill', based on a painting by Elisabeth Vellacott, appears also in the collection, *Fetch* (2007).¹⁰⁹ The poet is at once inside and outside the painting, consciousness and painterly technique coinciding, as in these lines from the end of the poem:

... You close your eyes
 and the field breaks into lines,
 a sketch of a field, it blurs
 and aches, gives way
 to white. You fill in the rest¹¹⁰.

I employed similar fluid shifts of perspective which depart from a view (real or imagined) of an actual painting, in poems in *The Japan Quiz* and in doing so, sow the seed for the invention of Clair Obscur in *Equinoctial*.

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.pascalepetit.blogspot.co.uk/search/label/What%20the%20Water%20Gave%20Me%20-%20Poems%20after%20Frida%20Kahlo> last accessed 25th September 2016.

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.invectiveagainstswans.tumblr.com/search/the+red+house> last accessed 25th September 2016.

¹⁰⁸ (Bridgend: Seren)

¹⁰⁹ (Cambridge: Salt)

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.



Figure 1: *Plum Garden over Shinohashi Bridge* by Ando Hiroshige.¹¹¹

The cover-image of *The Japan Quiz* is a painting by Ando Hiroshige. The title was prompted by my discovery of an actual online quiz about Japan and the title poem references this and the image, also found online. In the poem, I employ a collage technique which uses lines from the quiz's instructions juxtaposed with imagistic fragments.

... remember the fixed

frame of the branches
the blossom's revelry
the brush placed and stilled

deep coral
viridian ...¹¹²

Here I draw attention to the painting on the cover but do not literally describe it. I intended the open form, with its fractured, irregular phrasing, to communicate the poise of Japanese art, while at the same time, signalling a collection whose poems enact dialogues with actual paintings, or with ideas connected with art in general.

¹¹¹

<http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/hiroshige/plum.jpg> last accessed 25th September. Page undecipherable.

¹¹² Thompson, *Japan Quiz*, 8.

Michael Davidson defines what he calls a “painterly” poem as one that, “activates strategies of composition equivalent to but not dependent on the painting itself ... the poet reads the painting as a text rather than a static object, or else reads the larger painterly aesthetic generated by the painting.”¹¹³ My earlier ekphrastic procedures, and those employed in *Equinoctial*, have much in common with this notion of the “painterly” poem but also connect with more far-ranging “image-making” occurrences which move the ekphrases beyond *just* being responses to paintings, or other *literal* artworks. I would stretch my ‘painterly’ aesthetic to include representations of imaginary works of art; what John Hollander refers to as ‘notional ekphrasis’¹¹⁴ which includes ideas about / connected with art and with actual conventions of image-making (e.g. the self-portrait). My poem, ‘Saskia’s Mirror’, is a dramatic monologue in the voice of a mirror who is in love with the woman who looks into it. The poem communicates emotion via extended metaphor; the mirror imagines itself as a painting; the woman, as the artist:

... She treats me like a painting, a self-portrait.
 Sometimes she’ll rub me with her sleeve
 to make her colours grow. I’m an empty frame
 when she’s absent ...¹¹⁵

Here is a meta-narrative about ‘art-making’ in general. The poem can be read as being about the act of making a poem. A poem is always a kind of “self-portrait” of the poet. The mirror is also a voyeur (so, by extension, are the poet and the reader) and tries to see the woman’s breasts but they remain out of view, or she keeps them thus.

¹¹³ ‘Ekphrasis and the Postmodern Painter Poem,’ *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 42 (1983): 72, in Heffernan, *Museum of Words*, 2.

¹¹⁴ ‘The Poetics of Ekphrasis,’ *Word & Image* 4 (1988): 209. *Museum of Words*, 7.

¹¹⁵ Thompson, *Japan Quiz*, 34.

This is a subversion of a convention in art which was double-edged its intent,
as John Berger puts it:

The mirror was often used as a symbol of the vanity
of women. The moralizing, however, was mostly hypocritical.
You paint a naked woman because you enjoyed looking at her,
you put a mirror in her hand and you called the painting *Vanity*,
thus morally condemning the woman whose nakedness you had
depicted for your own pleasure. The real function of the mirror ...
was to make the woman connive in treating herself, first and
foremost, into a sight.¹¹⁶

Maybe this was a way of letting the male artist off the hook for blatant
voyeurism and objectification as traditionally the female ‘nude’ in art was the passive
object of the ‘active’ male gaze. Carol Ann Duffy subverts what had become a
‘normalized’ gendered practice in the poem ‘Standing Female Nude’, (in the 1985
collection of the same title) a dramatic monologue from the artist’s model’s point of
view and reversal of the tradition where the model is seen but not heard. The poem
also upturns the function of the monologue as a speech which a dramatist gives access
to a—traditionally—male actor’s inner thoughts. This is a complex ‘talking back’ in
which the dramatic monologue’s impact goes beyond the mere ‘voicing’ of a passive
subject. In fact, there are gender dynamics at play in Duffy’s poem between artist and
model that are complicated by those of class, the latter providing more of a levelling
function. “Both poor, we make our living where we can”;¹¹⁷ he, in fooling the wealthy
class who know nothing about quality; she, as model and prostitute. The energy of the
monologue, and how its tone elicits both sympathy and mockery, lifts ‘the nude’ out
of the role that art, the archive and the canon have designated for her, as decoratively

¹¹⁶ *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 2008), 45.

¹¹⁷ (London: Anvil), 46.

passive and silent. In the poem, her closing words, “It does not look like me”,¹¹⁸ is an ironic riposte to the masculine practice of ‘muse-making’ and the inevitable failure of such acts of containment. In my poem, the mirror, as lover and voyeur, is thwarted in ‘the gaze’ by the woman as artist and ‘agent’ in painting, re-painting and framing herself according to how she wants to be ‘seen’ and as much as she allows of herself to be seen.

Like ‘the nude’, ‘the interior’ in paintings conventionally frames women in domestic spaces. In *The Japan Quiz* and *Equinoctial*, I have experimented with subverting this convention and have taken Roy Fisher’s *Interiors with Various Figures*¹¹⁹ as a model which does likewise. Fisher’s ‘interiors’—not just the settings but their formal techniques—are strange and unsettling; within them gender roles and relationships remain ambivalent. The poems, with their skewed perspectives, both literally and psychologically, never ‘settle’ into coherent linear narratives.

My preoccupation with visual perspectives and other acts of seeing are evident in other of my poems featuring interiors. In ‘Night Interiors’, a sequence of three poems I present scenes (a pub, museum and petrol station) from unusual angles and under different lighting conditions. In ‘The Pub’, a group of young men are glimpsed playing snooker through a pub’s lit window, and “through rain”, and the effect is as if the onlooker is making / unmaking a painting with her gaze, or, it occurs to me in retrospect, taking a photograph. Another reading is that which presents the poet / persona as lens as in the previous example of a mirror, reflective devices which

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ *The Long and the Short of It: Poems 1955-2005* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe, 2005), 261-269.

I revisit Fisher’s poems and the idea of ‘interiors’ in the sequence, ‘Holiday Interiors’ (*Equinoctial*, 28-37) and discuss this sequence further in Zone Three.

mediate between 'realities'.

Looking across the A6, at 4am, through rain,
at first nothing lit up for the latch of your gaze
to drop onto, only somebody wading
through shadows, ...
that window, a frame ...

The further you step back
the more it clarifies, a print of young men
crouched over baize. Step forward, as if to tap
on the pane, see it blur; watch its colours run.¹²⁰

In the museum at night:

Paintings upstairs have to be guessed at
that is until the eye with its night sight widens,
at Lizzie Siddal, beatific in furs ...¹²¹

I find the premise of being in a museum, or other building at night when light comes unpredictably from unexpected places, creating unexpected effects, compelling. In such poetry I recognize the seeds of my interest in holograms which likewise arise from specific acts of looking and effects of light.

These examples of poems from this earlier collection reveal ekphrastic practice which was preoccupied with how art presented ways in which a poet could re / present the world, not just represent the art-work. In this sense, art, mostly in the forms of painting and photography, provided means for me, as a poet, to investigate 'reality'. It is as a result of extending this practice to include holography, and in employing its processes in finding a form for this practice-based project, that I am able to construe ekphrastic dialogues in *Equinoctial* as poetic enquiry.

¹²⁰ Thompson, *Japan Quiz*, 52.

¹²¹ Ibid., 53.

2.4 Ekphrasis and Barbara Guest's 'republic of space'

American poet Barbara Guest is one of my favourite poets. Her poetry is difficult to categorise but it is highly visual, varied in form; both elusive and allusive in meaning. Here I discuss her inclusion of the phrase 'the republic of space' in the ekphrastic poem, 'The Blue Stairs' (1968), as a phrase which can be applied more widely to her varied uses of language and the spaces of the page as "democratizing gestures" in her practice that offer multiple ways of organizing a poem. Eduardo Kac's impulse behind holopoetry was democratizing too in that the holopoems could be reproduced and, in their design, invited interaction by the reader / spectator.

'The Blue Stairs' was most likely written in response to the experience of ascending / descending the stairs in the Modern Museum in Amsterdam (FoI, 50).

There is no fear
in taking the first step
or the second
or the third

having a position
between several Popes

In fact the top
can be reached
without disaster ...¹²²

Its ekphrasis derives from the poet's enacting in words, the ascent / descent of stairs which themselves become an 'artifact' by nature of their decorativeness. The layout of the poem on the page and the measured white space between groups of words is a pictorial representation of the physical act of climbing and the mental act / s of observation and reflection.

¹²² *The Collected Poems of Barbara Guest*, Ed., Hadley Haden Guest (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2008), 61 hereafter referred to in the text as CP followed by page-number.

To graduate
the dimensions
ease them into sight

republic of space

(CP, 61)

There is reference to design of the stair, its colour, “Design: extraordinary / color: cobalt blue”, “... a composite / which sneers at marble // all orthodox movements”, and its function, “Its purpose / is to take you upward”, “To substantiate / a method of progress” (CP, 62). Guest balances considerations of the material and the immaterial: the staircase is made from a substance more flexible, less intractable than “marble”, is “Spatially selective” (CP, 63), and in the way it inhabits space, reveals an intangible creative impetus. In fact, I think that Guest recommends creative methods which challenge those offered by modernism (“marble”) with its ‘orthodoxies’, prescriptive artistic practice, disguised as ‘unorthodoxies’ under the banner of new art movements such as cubism and surrealism:

Reading stairs
as interpolation
in the problem of gradualness

with a heavy and pure logic

(CP, 63)

The “stairs” as “interpolation” (or ‘calling out’) represent an intervention in meaning-making processes that rely on “a heavy and pure logic” and which eschew “gradualness” which a spiral spatial arrangement upholds.

The poem's concluding section features "the master builder" and the "artists" who are banished to their "dormer rooms":

Who are usually grateful
to anyone who prevents them
from taking a false step

And having reached the summit
would like to stay there
even if the stairs are withdrawn

(CP, 63)

I interpret the "master builder", gendered by name but not role, as the poet / artist who assumes ultimate command in dominating spaces inhabited by women artists and poets. The act of confinement to the dormer rooms, a double-edged one: to "reach the summit" is aspirational; to withdraw the stairs is to take away a material support structure, and to keep female artists out of the public eye. Yet self-supporting acts of imagination will sustain the artist after the stairs have been removed. The staircase becomes a 'material' means for Guest to speculate on 'the immaterial'— the "republic of space". In *Forces of Imagination* Guest refers to an "invisible architecture" that "... upholds the poem while allowing a moment of relaxation for the unconscious" (FoI, 18). She draws a parallel with surrealist working methods, as she puts it, "to wander freely on the page, releasing mechanical birds", (FoI, 18-19). The 'mechanical birds' are contraptions, maybe some kind of constraint, by which the poet will enter the poem to "steer" the unconscious. Once again, and as I have previously mentioned in relation to Eduardo Kac, there is evidence from a poet of an ongoing and inevitable tension between trusting the unconscious and the imagination in the development of a poem while experiencing too an impulse to shape and order. This further connects with an ekphrasis which emphasises a traditionally gendered struggle for control over the passive (feminine) image by the active (masculine)

narrative impulse of the poem. As ekphrastic strategy, and apparent in the form of 'The Blue Stairs', Guest foregrounds the tensions between artistic freedom and control as an inevitable feature of the workings of imagination in creating the poem.

Guest's poetry is ekphrastic in the broadest sense in that it is 'painterly' in the varied forms it takes on the page. This is not to say that it seeks to be 'concrete' in imitating the form of actual objects; rather that it displays a fluency and agility in relation to the arrangements of language and white space of the page as responses to art; the world of art, and the world in general. Guest's responses to art are in dialogue both with specific paintings and with a milieu: the New York School and its close association with Abstract Expressionism and its Cubist legacy. Guest's poetics are invested in more than acts of seeing:

I confess that when looking at art I do not ask what it means, or how the paint was applied, the color chosen, but what has led the artist into this particular situation, what permits this particular piece of work, and how is it solved. When I look at certain paintings they begin to enter my unconscious. I then ask how the metamorphosis took place and if the process I witness can be used in my own work.

(FoI, 53)

This suggests that she 'immerses' herself in the medium, and by means of what seems to be a continual mental processing, filters what might be useful for her poetry. Her recognition, after regular and intense viewing of paintings, and several re-drafts of a poem, that the artist Matisse was "intellectual manipulator of space who misled us by his concentration on color" (FoI, 53) signified a shift in perspective in the way she viewed his practice, and, reconfigured her own. The quotation above indicates that her working methods oscillate between the instinctive and the intellectual in her manipulation of language and of the space of the page.

The extraordinary nature of Guest's work has been underplayed compared with her male peers in the New York School. She has been 'occluded' by male poets such as Frank O' Hara and John Ashbery and, as such, is even more worthy of attention in a study which seeks to go some way to redressing this balance. Even though I do not refer to Guest extensively in my discussions, her oeuvre, for the above reasons, is a presiding influence. She recognises the imagination as a "turbulent presence" (FoI, 31). The imagination as a 'turbulent' space is relevant to both Barbara Guest and Eduardo Kac and is evidenced in poetries which are endlessly questing after new forms. Guest's 'republic of space' arises from translations from art to poetry (such as in her dialogues with Matisse's working methods) and from poetry, back into art. It is an 'oscillatory' process, again to coin a word used by Eduardo Kac. I have already mentioned how Guest's comments on the imagination have informed the invention of the Holographic Flaneuse, Clair Obscur as navigator of *Equinoctial's* unsettled spaces.

Guest refers to her heritage in surrealism and how poetry and art overlapped in a successful symbiosis:

... One could never again look upon poetry as a locked kingdom. Poetry extended vertically, as well as horizontally. Never was it motionless within a linear structure.

(FoI, 51)

The idea of poetry being in motion and not confined to a linear structure, extending both "vertically" and "horizontally", brings to mind Eduardo Kac's description of a holopoem as being a 'turbulent' presence in the four dimensions it inhabits while acknowledging that what the viewer sees is a result of his manipulating co-ordinates of letters along vertical and horizontal axes on a computer¹²³ For both

¹²³ I discuss Kac's ideas in more detail later in Zone Three.

Eduardo Kac and Barbara Guest, the visual and verbal were inextricably linked, and as “artists” they acknowledged, as I do, and have stated elsewhere, the tensions, often irreconcilable, that were inherent in creative practice.

2.5 ‘The Holographic’ in the Literature

I was interested in ways in which ‘the holographic’, pertaining to holograms or holography, had been employed conceptually, in poetry, and in other literature as background to my ideas in this project. I am sceptical about the use of the term ‘holographic’ to describe phenomena that are merely out of the ordinary or have science-fiction and / or futuristic connotations. It was with such scepticism that I approached *The Holographic Universe* in which Michael Talbot draws together a range of theories circulating around ‘the holographic model’, as described by physicist David Bohm and neurophysicist Karl Pibram in which the universe is construed as a giant hologram, a projection from a level of reality beyond space and time. This idea, for Talbot:

... suddenly made sense of a wide range of phenomena so elusive they generally have been categorized outside the province of scientific understanding. These include telepathy, precognition, mystical feelings of oneness with the universe, and even psychokinesis, or the ability of the mind to move physical objects without anyone touching them’¹²⁴

Further from this, Talbot explains how David Bohm distinguished between two levels of reality, “the *implicate* (or “enfolded”) order and the *explicate* (or “unfolded”) order.”¹²⁵ The former refers to our everyday lives, “a kind of illusion like a holographic image”, and the latter to a “deeper order of existence ... that gives birth

¹²⁴ *The Holographic Universe* (London: Harper Collins, 1996), 2.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

to all the objects and appearances of our physical world in much the same way as a piece of holographic film gives birth to a hologram.”¹²⁶ Bohm detects that all forms of the universe are a result of “countless unfoldings and unfoldings between these two orders”¹²⁷ and Talbot presents an ‘active’ conception of the hologram:

The term *hologram* usually refers to an image that is static and does not convey the dynamic and ever active nature of the incalculable enfoldings and unfoldings that moment by moment create our universe, not as a hologram but as ‘holomovement’.¹²⁸

This is the territory of quantum physics. Although I remain broadly sceptical about the use of the term ‘holographic’ to describe a whole range of phenomena, the discussion of the hologram as an “active” presence and the idea of “holomovement” as a universal force has given impetus to the design of *Equinoctial*; the related poetics, and the invention and function of Clair Obscur. “Enfoldment” and “unfoldment” have resonance, for me, with Rachel Blau DuPlessis’s ideas about essay form: “... the essay is all margin, marginalia, and interstitial writing, it rearranges, enfolds and erodes” (BS, 37). Interstitial writing, in this project, is what emerges in the places in between the holographic image and the photographic film and gives birth to a poetics arising from the intersection between poetry and prose. In the final essay in *Quantum Poetics* (2015), Gwyneth Lewis alludes to the holographic paradigm in her discussion of Bohm’s theory of particle physics; how this helped her understanding of “both literature and the physical universe”, and, as a result, she has “stopped believing in any one place being privileged over another as a centre.”¹²⁹

This, as she puts it, gave her future poetry writing an even wider context, a

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 47.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ (Newcastle: Bloodaxe), 55.

“cosmology” to work within.¹³⁰ Conceiving of such contextual material as a “cosmology” has given me permission to extend my imaginative reach in developing new poetry, especially so with Clair Obscur as voyager and guide, and the hologram as a medium for transformation and full emergence for the female poet / artist.

In the journal article ‘The Holographic Paradigm: A New Model for the Study of Literature and Science,’ (1990)¹³¹ Mary Ellen Pitts finds the holographic model a useful one to challenge “the privileging of the epistemology that trails behind science ... and was incorporated into a mechanistic view of the universe that has dominated Western thinking”;¹³² in other words, an epistemology that was rigid and inflexible, prizing certainty and objectivity and a polarity between the disciplines of literature and science which failed to reflect scientific discoveries which were less deterministic. Pitt argues that the “holographic paradigm”, as presented by David Bohm and Karl Pibram, with its insights from a combination of scientific fields, can be linked to a different view of the interrelationship between literature and science; one stressing links rather than separation. The hologram provides a suitable model for the study of literature and science which is both inclusive and integrative, to “indicate the interrelationship of the world, the observer or writer, and the reader.”¹³³ Pitt emphasizes the spatial properties of the hologram; its capacities as “storage vehicle” and, how it makes “passages” between different types of information, “from object to wave storage, to image construction through decoding of an interference pattern”.¹³⁴ Pitt also refers to what she regards as the hologram’s most “uncanny”

¹³⁰ Ibid., 41.

¹³¹ *Modern Language Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 4, ‘Literature and Science,’ (Autumn, 1990), 80.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid., 92.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 85.

feature; how a single piece of the holographic plate “will reflect the entire image ...” so denoting simultaneous fragmentariness and wholeness.¹³⁵ Pitt’s article, from the cusp of the 1980s and 1990s, echoes Eduardo Kac’s desire to combine art and science to express a new epistemology in his holopoems, and theories of holopoetry, produced around the same time-period.

I have mentioned that when I viewed the holograms in Keswick, I was struck by their “uncanny” quality. In his essay on ‘The Uncanny’ (1900), Sigmund Freud centres on the German word, “heimlich” (homely) and its opposite, “unheimlich” (unhomely), the latter approximating most closely to the English, “uncanny”, hence the word has a sense which oscillates between “at home” and “not at home”; between the known and the unfamiliar.¹³⁶ There is then a further suggestion connected with this; that the “uncanny” refers to the return of something hidden, secret or repressed. The idea of being “at home” is the opposite of being a ‘flâneuse’. Clair Obscur, as Holographic Flâneuse therefore exploits ‘the uncanny’ inherent in the hologram as a liberating act for women who may have been confined within the home because of real or perceived threats in urban spaces; doubly confined by the ‘male gaze’.

In the poem, ‘Elegy: In Coherent Light’ (2010), Anne Stevenson draws on features of holography in an attempt to preserve the memories of two English poets, Matt Simpson and Michael Murphy, to whom the poem is dedicated. This is particularly apparent in the first stanza:

*Teach-cheap, teach-cheap, teach-cheap—
Sparrows are plying their chisels in the summer ivy,
Chipping the seconds spark by spark out of the hours.
I read in each whistling chip the sun’s holography.
My brain’s a film, I’m made of timed exposures,*

¹³⁵ Ibid., 81.

¹³⁶ Vincent B. Leitch, ed., *The Norton Anthology of Criticism* (New York / London: Norton, 2001), 931.

And pounding my ears and eyes with waves of light—
These animate flakes, these pictures I call sight.¹³⁷

The poet is a receptor (“My brain’s a film”) for what she hears, the distinctive sounds of the sparrows, and what she sees and feels (“the sun’s holography.”) She is trying to hold on to memories (“timed exposures”) and the ‘pictures’ are, presumably, those inner recollections of her friends. The holographic imagery continues into the first two lines of the second stanza and is then abandoned, “But now you’re out of the picture, no one can keep / Coherent sightings of you, except in language ...” The poem continues in more conventional elegiac terms and ends with a return to the metaphor of its opening, ‘We still keep house in a living tenement of words. / Pull down their walls of ivy, and you kill the birds.’ She suggests that certain summer moment brings specific memories of her dead friends, but also rebuts the thought, concluding that it is only in their respective poems that they can continue to ‘meet’ each other, metaphorically, as fragments of the hologram. Stevenson provides definitions of ‘coherent’ and of ‘holography’ and a quotation from *The Observer*, informing the reader that, “Every bit of a hologram contains information about the whole scene so you can snip it into pieces and [in each piece] see the original scene.”

In a short essay, ‘Haiku Holograms’ (2012), Dru Philippou considers the haiku as a ‘holographic’ form arguing that the connection between the two juxtaposed images in this type of poem is not necessarily clear at first and that this is “analogous to the interference pattern on the holographic plate.”¹³⁸ This again links with the earlier idea of ‘decoding’ or translation from one form of information to another. According to Philippou, the two images of the haiku “correspond to the two

¹³⁷ *Poetry* (July / August 2010) <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/detail/53610> last accessed 25th September 2016.

¹³⁸ *Modern Haiku*, Vol. 43, No.1, (Winter / Spring, 2012), 1.
<http://www.modernhaiku.org/essays/PhilippouEssay.html> last accessed 25th September 2016.

beams projected onto the holographic plate.” and when the poem is understood, comprehension occurs in “a split-second” as if a laser had been shone on the recording on the plate so that “a three-dimensional image appears in space.”¹³⁹ There is reference to the distinctive feature of the holographic plate whereby each fragment contains the whole image.¹⁴⁰ In each poem the hologram is espoused to represent a form of mental processing: of the workings of memory in the Stevenson poem and the cognitive juggling of disparate images in a haiku. A poem with accompanying notes attains an authority from a scholarly domain which is outside the poem. In the Stevenson poem, the notes explained what was suggested in the poem and overshadowed the suggestiveness of the metaphor. This has been a dilemma for me in writing poetry in response to holography; of straining to make continual connections with scientific theory rather than letting poetry stand for itself as the new knowledge I am claiming that it is. The requirements of the practice-based PhD are such that there must be a critical / reflective component and my claim of presenting this as a poetics seeks to avoid such forced separation between the two modes of writing.

Sinead Morrissey bases her collection *Parallax* (2013)¹⁴¹ around the optical phenomenon of ‘parallax’, where the size / shape of an object changes according to the angle of viewing, as a compositional device. In the ekphrastic poem ‘Fur’ the poet has foreknowledge, from a 21st century viewpoint, of the likely fate of the two young ambassadors in Hans Holbein’s painting, “the pox, the plague, the ague, a splinter / in the finger, a scratch at the back of the throat ... / might carry them off, in a matter of writhing / hours ... ”¹⁴² In the foreground of the painting is a distorted

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ (Manchester: Carcanet).

¹⁴² 23.

skull: a ‘memento mori’; example of ‘anamorphosis’, an optical effect whereby an object is distorted out of shape for a viewer looking at it face-on. The shape can only be recognised as a skull via a sidelong viewing, along an angle of ‘parallax’. The poet acknowledges the artist’s technique:

Too obvious a touch

to set the white skull straight. Better
to paint it as something other: driftwood
up-ended by magic¹⁴³

By this ‘sleight’ of design the painter has presented death’s inevitability in the presence of the skull; in its distortion, a means of death’s imaginary transcendence, however temporary and illusionary:

For there is bewitchery in those brown beards yet—
in the (slightly) rakish tilt to the saucer hat
of the ambassador on the left.¹⁴⁴

The poem’s language and form, with its dashes, ellipses, and knowingly placed white spaces give the impression of spoken thoughts; that the poet colludes with the painter’s technical decision. The result is a kind of ‘verbal anamorphosis’ which advises the reader to take a ‘slant’ perspective on the subject of mortality. Morrissey’s poems are restless and ambitious; widely roaming in their explorations of the personal and the political via a range of forms. Such ‘tilted’ perspectives are quizzical and probing and, in my view, and in being so, make their enquiry via ‘the holographic’ deft and unobtrusive.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

Judith A. Deitch refers to several holography practitioners, including Eduardo Kac, in notes to the article, ‘Love’s Hologram: Shakespeare, Ricoeur, and the Equivocations of Erotic Identity’ (2008) noting that Kac is a visual artist and a poet who “connects the two media, holography and poetry, to form ‘holopoetry’ ... a holographic visual poetics based on motion, discontinuous viewing zones, and metamorphosis.”¹⁴⁵ In the article Deitch emphasises, in particular, the phenomenon of ‘parallax’. She explores how scenes of looking and speaking in certain of Shakespeare’s sonnets are “enhanced by the lyric ‘I’s’ creation of distorted composite images”. She argues that the effects created are holographic and that the sonnets become “holograms of the self and other”, and in doing so correspond to related ideas in Paul Ricoeur’s philosophy.¹⁴⁶ Deitch writes:

Of the 154 sonnets, nine (2, 3, 5, 153, 22, 31, 62, 63) contains scenes of looking and speaking which are marked by the speaker’s creation of composite shifting images and such is the visual effect that the speaker, the beloved, and the reader ‘see’ through a poetic representation is analogous to viewing a hologram.¹⁴⁷

In Sonnet 2, for example, she refers to the “layered images” of the various “selves” as presented in the poem. There is the speaker (no pronoun attributed); the youth (thy/thine/thou; mine, my); the youth’s future child (his). The sonnet is a direct address to a youth but it projects ahead in time from an assumed present, “When forty winters shall besiege thy brow” to when the youth is old, and even further ahead in time to when the “youth” has a child, and so, becomes “new made” in age. There are layered projected “selves” projected forward in time by a speaker who has no

¹⁴⁵ *Poetics Today*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Fall, 2008), 528.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 529.

pronominal identifier within the poem.¹⁴⁸ This is the poem in full:

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
The youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,
Will be a tatter'd weed, of small worth held:
Then being ask'd where all thy beauty lies,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days;
To say, within thine own deep-sunken eyes,
Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise.
How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use,
If thou couldst answer 'This fair child of mine
Shall sum my count and make my excuse,'
Proving his beauty by succession thine!
This were to be new made when thou art old,
And seest thy blood warm when thou feel'st cold.

Deitch refers to the poems as being a "hologram". I cannot comment on the exact relation to Ricoeur's philosophy or to the detail of Deitch's extensive analysis but I recognise how these pronominal shifts also denote shifts in time and space and effect a degree of formal 'dimensionality' which could be considered 'holographic' in the contexts surrounding; to call them *actual* "holograms" is a bold, if somewhat implausible, claim.

Nicole Brossard said of her novel *Picture Theory*, in an interview, "I wrote (it) with the feeling of having a three-dimensional consciousness".¹⁴⁹ In saying this, she had in mind a more gendered "dimensionality" in mind than Deitch. Brossard was referring to the feminine, specifically lesbian, consciousness of the woman writer; the 'aerial vision' gave birth to this consciousness and 'the hologram', and the 'holographic' novel, was its subsequent embodiment. Her novel has a non-linear narrative structure, and presents the lives of five women from multiple perspectives and multiple places. Susan Knutson writes that the "summation" of the parts of

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 541-544.

¹⁴⁹ Louise Cotnoir et al., "Interview with Nicole Brossard on *Picture Theory*", *Canadian Fiction Magazine*, Vol. 47 (1983): 122-135 in *Nicole Brossard: Essays on Her Works*, ed. Louise H. Forsyth (Toronto / Buffalo / Chicago / Lancaster: Guernica, 2005), 137.

Picture Theory is “the hologram of the integral woman.”¹⁵⁰ The trope of the hologram allows Brossard to look at the woman artist from all angles and to bring her into being via its immersive and illuminating properties. Her approach involves obliquity; different ways of seeing, “I am talking here about a certain angle of vision. To get there I had to get up and move, in order that the opaque body of the patriarchy no longer obstruct my vision. Displaced I am” (AL, 79). ‘Displacement’ here is double-edged: to be ‘displaced’ by men is to lose one’s place, but to move oneself into another place, as Brossard suggests, is liberatory. In order to find an angle of perspective where the ‘hologram’, representing ‘wholeness’, will be actualised, the viewer has to move. Women should keep on in their quest for “aerial vision” which “never freezes its gaze on anything” (AL, 85). This implies an extension of ordinary ways of ‘seeing’; for writing conceived as:

... a tool which enables us to reflect, and to reflect on ways thought is organised. Just as the telescope and the microscope are tools which extend our sight beyond its actual possibilities, writing is a mechanism through which we can observe some of the sequences our brain develops in its potential / actual perception of energized matter.

(AL, 50)

For Brossard, ‘the aerial letter’ and ‘the hologram’ are means of extending ‘sight’ to produce writing which, like DuPlessis’s, is not subject to gender-reductiveness and is speculative in intent.

In concluding this brief survey of other writers I would note that I have found the application of the hologram as an interpretive and creative model for reading and writing both fascinating and frustrating. It is sometimes *too* convenient to ascribe the terms, ‘holographic’ or ‘hologram’ to poetry which is merely being what poetry *is*, multivalent and multi-dimensional, via structural and figurative means. But

¹⁵⁰ ‘Feminist Legends of Natureculture: Brossard, Haraway, Science’, in Forsyth, *Essays*, 162.

if we wish to consider different paradigms; shifts toward forging poetics that show an immersive sensibility, and nuanced gendered readings, broad considerations of ‘the hologram’ as a model of speculation seems highly appropriate. Poetry, after all, does not have to settle arguments nor provide their absolute resolution.

2.6 Eduardo Kac and Holopoetry



Figure 2: Hologram in the Puzzling Palace, Keswick¹⁵¹

The above is an example of one of the holograms in the gallery in Keswick which prompted my first thoughts about the connection between holograms and poems. This photograph, taken by me, presents a face from the front; if I moved slightly to one side, I would see an empty background behind glass. If the face was a sculpture, the shift in movement, and phenomenon of parallax, via angle of vision, would result in another view of the object, albeit skewed. As I have stated, it was the ‘there / not-there-ness’ property of the hologram that, for me, connected with ideas of grasping at ‘meanings’ of a poem; a poem was ultimately ‘ungraspable’ or subject to types of ‘knowing’ which could *only* be communicated as poetry.

¹⁵¹ Photograph by Pam Thompson

On first viewing Eduardo Kac's holopoems on his web-site¹⁵² I was aware that viewing the works via a web-page meant I could not respond to them as they actually are, only my idea of what they might be like derived from Kac's writings and in my responses to the images of holopoems. Some of the holopoems are abroad; others in collections in England which were not easy for me to reach. My ekphrastic dialogues became doubly imaginative from this removed stance. However, I was able to view *Amalgam* in July 2014; a version of the holopoem was on display with other of Kac's early works in an exhibition of Latin American art at Earls Court Exhibition Centre. My poem 'You approach and ...' (E, 99) was written in direct response to my viewing of this holopoem and the poem approximates a page version Kac's idea of 'binocular reading'. I discuss this in more detail in Zone Three. I was surprised and thrilled to meet Eduardo Kac at this exhibition. I mentioned my interest in his work and he said there were only three holopoets, to his knowledge, and no female holopoets. Why didn't I become the first female holopoet? In my early discussions with Martin Richardson about this project we discussed the possibility of making holograms of some poems. I was, and still am, interested in staging a small exhibition of holographic work to supplement the work on the page but do not yet have knowledge of hologram-making.

I have mentioned that Eduardo Kac discovered holopoetry by means of experiments with holography. Holography itself arose from experimental work by British Hungarian scientist, Dennis Gabor, in 1947 where he sought to improve the resolution of the electron microscope. My non-scientific interpretation of what they were both doing was manipulating the "language" of light (encoding / decoding of its 'waves') towards optical discoveries which led to new ways of 'seeing'. The invention of the laser in 1960, in providing an intense, directed source of light,

¹⁵² <http://www.ekac.org> last accessed 25th September 2016.

enhanced these processes.

Kac invented holopoetry in 1983. He defines a holopoem as “a poem conceived, made and displayed holographically ... organized non-linearly in an immaterial three-dimensional space ... that even as the reader or viewer observes it, changes and gives rise to new meanings” (H, 29). He makes a distinction between “optical holopoems” (e.g. *Holo/Olho*, his first optical holopoem) where actual physical letters made of metal, wood or other materials are filmed via a laser as a hologram and “computer or digital” holopoems (e.g. *Quando*, Kac’s first digital holopoem-see below) whereby text is manipulated on a computer and, at a later stage, filmed holographically (H, 47- 48). Working on a computer enabled Kac to manipulate his ‘space’ more effectively.

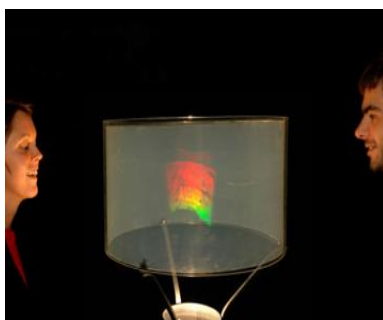


Figure 3. Eduardo Kac, *Quando? (When?)* (1987-8)¹⁵³

Kac was an active figure on the Brazilian avant-garde scene in the 1980s and 1990s. His holopoetry belongs to the tradition of visual and concrete poetry: twentieth-century writers and artists¹⁵⁴ who combined words and images testing what could be

¹⁵³ 40 cm diameter computer integral hologram. Collection of the artist. 360 degree hologram with 720 degree textimage: 10 x 50 inches, 16 inches in diameter. Self-contained display includes clear acrylic cylinder and rotating metal display unit with bulb.

¹⁵⁴ Including e.g. Stéphane Mallarmé, Marinetti and the Futurists, Apollinaire and Cubism, Brazilian neo-concrete poets, Vasili Kaminsky, e.e. Cummings and others who “... moved beyond the line as the structural unit of poetry.”

brought to poetic form, particularly poetry's 'materiality' whether it was written on paper or shaped in other materials such as wood, plexiglass, or metal (H, 40).

There are parallels between what Eduardo Kac articulated as his aims for holopoetry and those expressed by Stéphane Mallarmé in his Preface to 'Une coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard' (1897). As Kac puts it:

... I'm interested in a syntax of disruptive events; in animated language that evades and deflects interpretation. I'm interested in interactive reading/writing and in propagating light as its medium. In holopoetry, texts are networks animated by motion scripting and discontinuous rendering of words.

(H, 54)

Of the form of his poem, and the intentions behind it, Mallarmé writes:

... Everything takes place, in sections, by supposition; narrative is avoided. In addition this use of the bare thought with its retreats, prolongations, and flights, by reason of its very design, for anyone wishing to read it aloud, results in a score ... let us readily accept that the tentative participates with the unforeseen in the pursuit, specific and dear to our time, of free verse and the prose poem.¹⁵⁵

David Scott says that Mallarmé was "the first modern poet to articulate the page ... as a concept ... and as the white space on which the words were printed, while at the same time, extending ... the intrinsic structures of language."¹⁵⁶ Both Kac and Mallarmé disrupted linear syntax to approximate the actual workings of thought in ways poetry had not done before. Both poets 'stretched' what language could do: Mallarmé composed the page like a musical score while Kac composed language in the medium of light; the organization of words in space being a common feature to both. They both articulated a poetics that was exploratory and speculative.

¹⁵⁵ I am referring to a translation by A.S. Kline (2007) which can be found at <http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/French/MallarmeUnCoupdeDes.htm> last accessed 25th September 2016

¹⁵⁶ *Pictorialist Poetics: Poetry and the Visual Arts in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 138.

Developments in the technologies of perception in the near-century that separates Kac and Mallarmé see striking differences between reading and writing practices of holopoetry and Mallarmé's poem. Kac was able, via holography and computing software, to literally animate syntax, and in so doing, blended text and image to present different readings from different viewing perspectives. Thus, combinations of words and letters might present themselves in formations outside of known semantics. Undoubtedly Mallarmé, in seeking to approximate thought via experiments with the page and typography, went some way towards presenting poetry as knowledge and was at the forefront of related experiments in modernist poetry and art. Through holography Kac was able to investigate language's role in shaping and creating new knowledge in the form of the holopoems:

I am trying to deal with a problem that I see as being essentially epistemological. I am trying to reflect on the very nature of language, focusing particularly on written language. How does language shape our reality, define our own identity? How does it engage or not, our thoughts in the process of dialogue?

(H, 119)

New Media, in the form of, for example, computer poems, holographic poems,¹⁵⁷ videopoetry, hypertext poems, challenged linearity of form, and the page as medium of composition. Other artists than Kac working across the different forms included Aaron Marcus, Dieter Jung, Ernesto Melo e Castro, and Jim Rosenberg (H, 43).

I have mentioned that holopoetry arose both from Kac's seizing of the potential of holography and his desire to stretch the possibilities for poetry beyond that which, so far, New Media allowed. This led to his investigations of the potential of holographic

¹⁵⁷ Not 'holopoetry', according to Kac's definitions, as in these poems the words were "written" before they were made into holograms and not within the medium itself.

space. His interest was in the visual but he considered the page, as its basic structuring agent, to be a “bounded” space.¹⁵⁸ This two-dimensional space, and the three-dimensional surfaces of poetry as sculpture, were limited, not only in being “bounded”, but by their “immutability and stability” (H, 44). Kac looked for a poetic language that would be malleable, fluid and elastic and found it by means of holography. Kac draws attention to the hologram as a ‘spatial medium’ whose “immaterial space”, made of light, was such that his “texts” could be made to inhabit both space and time in new ways. The new perceptual experiences for the viewer, seemingly randomly apprehended, were, in fact, carefully controlled by the artist (H, 80). As I became more acquainted with Kac’s holopoems and the contexts of their making I began to translate aspects of these onto the page in first drafts of new poetry. My earliest attempts were page versions of the holopems e.g. ‘Adrift’ (E, 93) and ‘Quando’ (E, 92) where I intervened with Kac’s intention in presenting alternative forms. At this stage, my responses did not emphasise the personal / emotional. Here I introduce some features of the process of making holopoems (and examples how I have used them) in relation to their appearance. I elaborate more on how Kac’s theory informs specific poems in Zone Three. From Kac’s writings the most significant features of holopoems can be summed up as: immateriality (spaces made of diffracted light); non-linearity (being read in leaps and/or via temporal reversals); textual instability (the holographic text does not preserve a single visual structure); and interactivity (each movement of the viewer in front of the holopoem changes what is read).

¹⁵⁸ Kac’s work was a development of that begun by Wolfgang Iser whereby the reading process involved an interaction between the text and the reader’s imagination so creating an ‘in-between / virtual’ text cognitively.

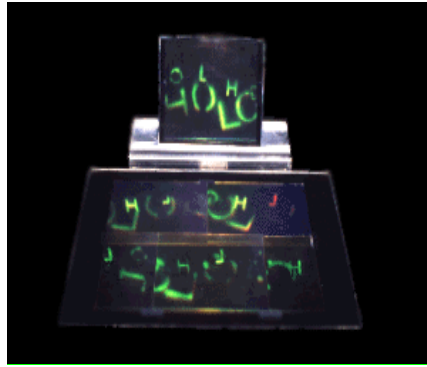


Figure 4. Eduardo Kac, 'Holo/*Olho*' ('Holo/Eye') 1983.¹⁵⁹

'Holo/*Olho*' ('Holo/Eye') was Kac's first holopoem and relies on a mirroring effect of five holograms of letters in space which were fragmented then reassembled. This recreates, in its syntax, a structure that refers to the 'holographic model', according to which the information of the whole is contained in the part and vice versa.¹⁶⁰ I have applied this technique to the poem, 'Postcards from Belfast' (E, 38-39) in as much as the poem is a sestina and I have chosen line end-words which are not only relevant for the specific poem but which reverberate for the whole project.



Figure 5. Eduardo Kac, *Amalgam*, 1990.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ 25 x 30 cm. Reflection holograms mounted on wood and Plexiglas. Collection UECLAA, University of Essex, UK.

¹⁶⁰ Eduardo Kac, ed., *Media Poetry: An International Anthology* (Bristol / Chicago: Intellect Books, 2007), 136-7 hereafter referred to in the text as MP followed by page-number.

¹⁶¹ 10 x 7.5cm. White light reflection hologram. Edition of 100. Public collections: Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio. Private collections worldwide.

Amalgam (above) is an example of a holopoem which demonstrates what Kac refers to as the “behavior” of letters (whereby words are set in motion), and use of colours that fluctuate and are not fixed. Such “behavior” is ‘activated’ by the movement of the viewer. The holopoem comprises two sets of words (“flower-void” and “vortex-flow”) where each set blends into the other as the viewer tries to read the text (MP, 144). The left eye and right eye view each set simultaneously, and, as a result of the “behavior” of the letters in space, each sees a different view. This is what Kac refers to as “binocular reading”: both eyes try to force a synthesis and at the same time an ‘in-between’ reading occurs which may fall outside usual syntactical meaning. I intended my poem ‘You approach and ...’ (E, 99) to offer up a “binocular reading” (to recreate a version of what I had experienced) by means of adjustments to typography and white space.



Figure 6. Eduardo Kac, *Adrift*, 1991.¹⁶²

What the viewer perceives in *Amalgam*, and the later holopoem, *Adrift* (above), is as a result of the construction of viewing-zones. Viewing-zones, as I have mentioned, are non-physical, invisible zones, designed by computer, situated in front of the hologram through which the reader sees the words of the poem; a change of viewing position (within the zone) brings a different combination of words. In *Adrift* seven

¹⁶² 30 x 40 cm¹⁶², digital hologram, Collection Ruth and Marvin Sackner, Miami.

words appear to dissolve in space and into each other as the viewer reads them. A viewer has a choice where to begin reading the poem.¹⁶³ Most of the letters of the words stay close to the “axes” (of the software) as Kac has planned; however, one word ‘Breathe’, appears to move more freely than the other words, “is blown by an imaginary wind as its letters actually move away from their original position to dissolve again in the light field”, such a movement disrupting the relative “apparent stability” of the other words (MP, 145). In this way, Kac’s perceptual syntax takes advantage of the logic and the topology of the new poetic space. I have taken the idea of words “drifting” across space (a light field) into my poems, ‘drift’ (E, 52-53) and ‘Adrift’ (E, 93).



Figure 7. Eduardo Kac, *Phoenix*, 1989.¹⁶⁴

Another early holopoem, *Phoenix* (1989, above) is composed of only one letter, ‘W’. It draws attention solely to this letter’s visual properties and also how it represents a particular sound. (MP, 142). There is a laser image of the letter in front of which is a vertical open flame, which might be interpreted as the letter ‘I’ moving randomly according to air currents. My poem ‘Phoenix’ (E, 94) as the final poem in

¹⁶³ This is true of poetry on the page which adopts a ‘open-field’ method although such poetry is bound by the limits of the page. See e.g. Wendy Mulford, ‘I CHINA AM’ in *Infinite Difference: Other Poetries by U.K. Women Poets*, ed., Carrie Etter (Exeter: Shearsman), 34-40.

¹⁶⁴ 30 x 40 cm. Laser transmission hologram with flame. Collection of the author.

the ‘Left Eye / Through the Hologram’ section of *Equinoctial*, emphasises the transfixing quality of the laser “flame” to bring to mind, in Kac’s words, how “primitive man was (transfixed) by fire” (MP, 142).

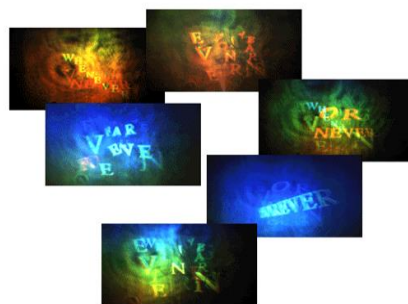


Figure 8: Eduardo Kac, *Adhuc*, 1991.¹⁶⁵

My poem ‘Adhuc’ (E, 97-98) after the holopoem of the same name (see above) is the first poem in the ‘Convergence / Glory Sky-Shell’ section of *Equinoctial*. In adopting a circular, repetitive form (canzone) and using ‘Adhuc’ as my title, I reference a holopoem whose words refer to time in various ways – “ ‘whenever’, ‘four years’, ‘or never’, ‘for eve’, ‘forever’, ‘evening’ ” (MP, 147). My intersections with the word ‘whenever’ in my poem (as one of its line end-words) points to an exploration of events in time; also a consciousness of how the hologram has allowed for expanded perceptions of time in relation to personal events. Other words in the poem connect with preoccupations of my project and take advantage of the circularity of enquiry that the canzone facilitates. The way that words “behave” is unique to the grammar of holopoetry and such “behavior” only becomes possible because of the

¹⁶⁵ 30 x40 cm. Multicolor computer holographic stereogram. Edition of 3. Collection Jonathan Ross, London. Collection Karas, Madrid. Collection Vito Orazem and Söke Dinkla, Essen, Germany.

nature of its space: a field of diffracting light as opposed to the tangible surfaces of pages and objects. The spatial gaps cannot be ‘seen’, unlike the white space of the page; “an interplay of presence and absence” (H, 145). This, then, as Kac says, is “... the domain of spatiotemporal writing, four dimensional writing” (H, 145).

... As the viewer reads the poem in space—that is, moves relative to the hologram—he or she constantly modifies the structure of the text. A holopoem is a spatiotemporal event: it evokes thought processes ...

(MP, 129)

As a consequence, “In the act of reading the reader or viewer is also ‘writing’: each reader writes his or her own texts as he or she looks at the piece ”(H, 56).

The idea of a holopoem as “a spatiotemporal event”, which would inhabit an in-between space between two and three dimensions, and which is, by nature of its properties, “a turbulent space”, presented challenges, to scientific and other cultural orthodoxies, which paralleled those of the early years of modernism. Such challenges include, as Kac comments¹⁶⁶:

... The cultural relativism promoted by post-structuralism and deconstruction, the new scientific speculative thinking boosted by digital visualization techniques, the holism of telecommunications networks, and the interactive cyberspace of emerging Telepresence and Virtual Reality.

(H, 50)

¹⁶⁶ Whilst Kac overtly places his own work within a heritage of modernist experimentation with the space of the page, he nevertheless regards it as a stage beyond such practice. It is evident that his focus upon the ‘turbulent space’ of holopoetry as a “syntax of disruptive events” has much in common with aspects of poststructuralism. His sense of holopoetry promoting an “animated language that evades and deflects interpretation” has clear connections to notions of poststructuralist indeterminacy. Modernist poetry sometimes betrays an anxiety over fragmentation (famously embodied in Eliot’s lines in *The Waste Land* “these fragments I have shored against my ruins”). By contrast, Kac is happy to leave the viewer free to encounter the turbulent space they also affect, without ordering the experience for them.

Kac considered the proliferation of new technologies, and the speed of their advancement a greater challenge to 'old' cultural and scientific models and that these, along with new theories such as chaos theory, relativity and quantum theory, could be employed to "destroy the notion of deterministic predictability and help form the new holistic paradigm" (H, 50). Holography informed that paradigm; holopoetry, for Kac, was the appropriate means within it for artistic expression via "the syntax of disruptive events; in animated language that evades and deflects interpretation" (H, 50).

The viewer of a holopoem does not stand at a distance but interacts with it. Kac viewed communication and interaction as increasingly important features of works of art in a world increasingly dominated by a mass media which encouraged passive reception. He wanted to develop art forms that involved viewer participation, claiming that "the fine arts have traditionally privileged visuality by means of 'the disembodied eye' " (H, 110) and that there was elitism in the distanced gaze which appropriated without becoming actively engaged, or promoting such engagement elsewhere, reminiscent of characteristics of 'flânerie'. Kac recognized anti-democratizing practices such as when museums kept artworks, which were meant to be interacted with, away from the public. As evidence of this practice, Kac mentions works of artists working within the Neoconcrete movement, pointing out that those (works) which " ... were meant to be manipulated are now in important collections and they can't even be touched ..." (H, 110). He recommended that there should be new curatorial practices "to deal with the problem of preserving, documenting, and sharing with the public, events of that nature" (H, 110). It was important for Kac that, "the holopoem can be duplicated in large quantities" (H, 110), a measure to ensure that they could be experienced by different audiences. Since Kac wrote those words, the digital availability of art has proliferated but is still subject to selection and control

by the ‘curators’ of its ‘museums’. I have mentioned that, despite the fact that they were reproduced in some numbers, I was not able to experience Kac’s holopoems first hand, apart from the one exception, *Amalgam*. The holopoems are either abroad or in UK collections, some of them private, which were too far from my location to visit. It is ironic that the artefacts that Kac wanted to make accessible to the public are, in actuality, difficult to access other than online. The same can be said of Martin Richardson’s holograms of John Harrison’s timekeeper as they are on restricted view away from the public in the Greenwich museum. In the scheme of my project, these challenges of ‘seeing’ give impetus to Clair’s quest by where she seeks access to the hologram. She wants to travel through it, making those passages, and the resulting state of ‘convergence’, all the more significant. Kac said, “I like to think of myself beyond national boundaries, and beyond media boundaries as well. I work between literature and art” (H, 101). I have negotiated my identity as a poet / researcher by acts of positioning and re-positioning myself between boundaries of art and science, theory and practice, acts which are gendered by means of Clair and flâneuserie.

2.7. Martin Richardson and the Holograms in Greenwich



Figure 9. John Harrison, ‘H4’, 1759.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Photograph by Pam Thompson.



Figure 10. Martin Richardson, Hologram of 'H4', 2008.¹⁶⁸

I have referred to the practice of reproducing museum artefacts by digital means for making such objects more widely accessible. Martin Richardson's two holograms of John Harrison's timekeeper, 'H4', in the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, were made to preserve a valuable and fragile object to be displayed one day either in place of the original, or in another location from it. The Royal Observatory was Britain's first state-funded scientific institution. It dates back to 1675, with its first Royal Astronomer, John Flamsteed, was installed in 1676. Thereafter, astronomers' most significant work involved observations made with telescopes aligned on a meridian, a line between North and South poles, to take measurements of transits of stars and planets. This provided important data to aid navigation, cartography and timekeeping.¹⁶⁹ The viewing of Martin Richardson's holograms, on 19th February 2013, was the beginning of my flâneuserie in Greenwich and an important new stage of the research; important because of the viewing itself and also Martin's account of the making the holograms and the events leading up to it. The holograms, being situated in Greenwich, with its historical maritime and astronomical associations, yielded rich generative material for my poetry. More specifically, it was the nagging question, 'Where are the women'? which prompted me to contemplate the appearance and origins of female figureheads of ships, situated in the National Maritime Museum and in The Cutty Sark, and to further consider what

¹⁶⁸ Richardson, *Stopping Time*, 8.

¹⁶⁹ *Royal Observatory Greenwich: Souvenir Guide*, (Greenwich: NMM, 2012), 18.

significance ‘the figurehead’ might have for my work. Such contemplation resulted in the invention of the Holographic Flâneuse, Clair Obscur, as conceptual ‘figurehead’ and gendering anchor for poetry and poetics.

At the time of my viewing, the holograms of the timepiece were not accessible to public viewing. This is understandable as conditions had to be just right for vulnerable artefacts and holographic representations of them. The original ‘H4’ is housed in a secure protective glass case. Temperature and lighting has to be carefully adjusted, as was also the case in the workshop where the holograms were housed, along with clocks and chronometers which were being tested or repaired. The photograph above was taken moments after the hologram was made. Its colour, a bright vibrant green, along with the green of the Meridian laser, recurs significantly in the poems in relation to processes and environments which actualize and transform. Martin and I were met by Jonathan Betts who was, at that time, chief horologist at the museum. Jonathan was a one of the experts who had accompanied Martin when made the holograms in March, 2008. There were a combination of circumstances which coalesced in the decision to name my collection *Equinoctial*.¹⁷⁰ Martin’s dramatic account of that night of the making of holograms; how a storm threatened; the darkening sky; the raindrops illuminated by the laser; the date, near the spring equinox; the precarious nature of the undertaking. The fact that I went to view the holograms at a similar time of year to when they were made lent further weight to my decision about the title. We viewed the timepiece in the Gallery of Time first and the holograms, in the conservation workshop, afterwards. The timepiece, ‘H4’ (exhibited with three earlier, cumbersome, less accurate models for calculating longitude ¹⁷¹)

¹⁷⁰ I discuss the title further in Zone Three.

¹⁷¹ A calculation based on the position of a ship at sea and the time at a known starting point. Such calculations could be made by charting the position of the Sun for local time (which could be

was an example of the ‘leading-edge’ ” technology of its day, just as the hologram was an example of such in 2008 (ST, 2). The exact stopped time of the timepiece was recorded via the hologram providing at once both a ‘compression’ or collapsing of time and evidence of the gap between 1759 and 2008, the respective years when each was made. I was struck by how small and elegant ‘H4’, a precision clock, was, in comparison with Harrison’s more cumbersome earlier models. As Martin and Jonathan talked, I learnt more about the holograms: about the night of their making; technicalities of process; also that the astronaut Neil Armstrong had been to see them. I recorded my thoughts and impressions in journal entries, these often taking poem-like form, as in the extract below where I assimilated what particularly struck me from Martin’s account, some of which reappears, in more ‘shaped’ form, in the poem, ‘The Telling’ (E, 74). This is an example of using poetry as enquiry; such enquiry arises from an assimilation of ‘the holographic’ as part of its process.

The hologram is a ‘you are here’.
 Never been to sea. Has kept time
 but in it time has stopped. In it,
 reflected light is real.
 Like moonlight in a puddle.
 Other visitors watch us behind glass-
 fish in an aquarium of time,
 all of us. He tells us about
 that pendulum-clock, made in the 1970s,
 replica of one made by Harrison,
 that this patient’s special, see its readings,
 we watch the wavy line- its reactions
 to temperature, air conditions, the number
 of beats of its brass heart, how taller than us,
 in its exquisite frame. Concocted
 from Harrison’s prototype, swore it would lose

consistently checked at the same time each day) and ‘home time’, which could be found by astronomy, but could only be kept to refer to, by having a clock set to it. Prior to this sailors had relied upon a combination of methods to make accurate observations of their position at sea in order to avoid shipwreck. These included older methods, such as the compass, monitoring the speed of the ship and depth of water; the sextant and octant, developed in the 1750s, to measure angular distances between the moon and stars; and, from the 1720s, clocks. Such a clock needed to keep going, with high accuracy, under all the conditions found in a moving ship. I am indebted to information from the *Royal Observatory, Greenwich Souvenir Guide*, pages 24-36.

no more than one second, and in this hospital of time
its keeper is proud to tend to this patient
for its American owner, its dandy skeleton,
its wires, its perpetual readings.
Such excitement in his voice,
the hothoused patient, history, its hours,
minutes, seconds, traced on a screen
evening out eventually to one straight line.
and always at the centre the hologram
timekeeper under glass
in another location reflections intact
engravings on its surface on its back
Where are the women?
That night in March men strode up the hill
under a stormy sky, with a task
'Between the thought and the action...'
Sunset and shadows, over there Canary Wharf
is situated on a hill', the 02, and here where time was measured
where ships went down under the unreliable stars.

A refined version of my original notebook jottings, this piece exists in a form of
writing between the original notes and the poems which appear in the collection.

Preoccupations in the poetry are already present here: reflected light as other elements
(water, glass); how the hologram captures details a viewer would not normally see
such as engravings on the back, also reflections in the room; "stormy sky",
suggestions of 'turbulence' prior to creative endeavour; 'in-between' states, here,
between day and night, "twilight", the hologram existing between the holographic
plate and the light shining on it. I include the question that prompted my flâneuserie,
"*Where are the women?*"

I refer to clocks in the workshop as being like "hothoused" patients having
their 'bodily' functions closely monitored. Martin was there for a practical purpose: to
check to see whether the holographic plates, from which copies could be made, had
oxidized and needed cleaning, (bleaching); their pinkish tinge revealed that they did.
This connects with a reading of museum artefacts as 'rareified' and needing to be
concealed or to be given exclusive and privileged conditions of display. I further
reflected, from this, on the 'preciousness' of artefacts: how far did their vulnerability

add to their ‘exclusiveness’ ? In the essay, ‘ The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’(1936) Walter Benjamin writes that original works of art possessed a special “aura” that copies of the work did not possess; and that this aura added to their exclusivity and preciousness.¹⁷² The holograms were a copies of the timekeeper yet were works of art in their own right; its “aura” came from their spectral quality as holograms. Looking down on the holograms in their glass case was like looking into green water. The colour ‘green’ (colour of the holograms and the Meridian laser) recurs in the poems and is associated with transformational, creative energy. The penultimate poem in the collection, ‘The Green Apartment’ (E, 111) derives from a story of the Meridian laser shining into an apartment (place of Clair’s quest) in a tower-block in London of which I say more later.



Figure 11. Figurehead in The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.¹⁷³

Clair’s quest for, and eventual discovery of the Green Apartment, involves reclaiming the symbolism of the female figureheads who I discovered represented women in the Greenwich museums. Pablo Neruda’s *The House in the Sand* (1966), comprises mostly prose poems recalling his house and its setting on Isla Negra, a small fishing village on the southern coast of Chile. In his house and gardens are

¹⁷² In *Illuminations*, ed., Hanna Arendt, trans. Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999), 215.

figureheads which were discovered washed up along the coast. His poems about these figureheads convey some of the typical superstitious beliefs comprising both attraction and fear. The prose-poem ‘Ceremony’, recounts an incident in 1847 when the seamen of the American vessel, *Cymbeline* had mutinied because they thought that the figurehead ‘had moved its eyes during the voyage, putting them off course and terrifying the crew.’¹⁷⁴ They left the ship in a cove and the figurehead, a “white and gold statue” of “a very young bride” was taken down by others sailors, ‘impelled by religious terror’.¹⁷⁵ There is further reference to the “wrenching beauty” of the figurehead’s face.¹⁷⁶ There is an ancient belief that a ship needed ‘eyes’ to find its way. Male and female figureheads were used for both vision and protection. However, the practice of using female figureheads was ambivalent. They were popular, often depicted as baring one or both breasts, or in revealing garments; in a similar way maybe, to a tattoo of a mermaid on a sailor’s arm; sexual but unthreatening being inanimate. A figurehead was supposed to calm a storm at sea. And yet, as Neruda’s poem shows, figureheads could invoke fear; better to dismantle then hide them than keep them on show. Similarly, a woman on board a ship was considered unlucky; on the one hand, actual women on board ship were thought to be unlucky, yet a naked effigy of a woman was supposed to calm a storm at sea. Male and animal figureheads were accorded no such ambivalence.¹⁷⁷ The holograms were versions of Harrison’s timekeeper which had helped sailors navigate more accurately than by the stars and so avoid shipwreck. At the same time, their ships would have borne figureheads on the

¹⁷⁴ (New York: White Pine, 2004), 77.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ http://www.nmrportsmouth.org.uk/sites/default/files/styles/homepage_collections_slidshows/public/moulds/image/Figureheads.pdf last accessed 22nd August 2016. The website has since disappeared.

prow which traditionally provided another means of ‘vision’ for avoiding hazards. Yet women were not in command of those ships; were not allowed on board, unless as wooden effigies, or as female slaves. The names of the female figureheads I found in the Greenwich museums and recorded in my journal and poems (e.g. *Elizabeth Fry*, *Lalla Rookh*, *Maud*, *Amphritite*, *Zenobia*, *Marianne*, *Sunbeam*, *Rose of Torridge*, *Mary Trail*, *Cleopatra*) told me nothing of those women’s achievement, only details of their ships, when and where they were “lost, wrecked, foundered in a gale”, or that “nothing is known”.

In the collection, *Wrack* (2007) Carol Watts draws from sources of a 1772 shipwreck of a merchant ship returning from Grenada on the coast of Devon. The poems circulate around historical and contemporary instances of looting and exploitation and the notion of woman as ‘wreck’, being *without* agency:

her wanting she is wreck
and subject to the blandishments
of tiding¹⁷⁸

This idea resonates with my concerns in my project, and associations I make with the Greenwich figureheads. The female figureheads had been restored and painted in glossy colours; most were entire, some only heads or torsos; some were unnamed, their ships unknown. The figurehead at the prow of *The Cutty Sark*, Nannie Dee, is named after a female ‘witch’ in Robbie Burns’s poem *Tam O’Shanter*, but actually becomes recognized for what she wears rather than what she is. ‘Cutty Sark’ is a ‘short smock’. In the poem she is told to dance by the main character, as a trial of her supposed witchery, but also to be a spectacle for the male gaze, and as punishment for tempting a male. Here is a familiar type of misogyny which ascribes morality (or, rather, immorality) according to how a woman dresses and behaves. Naming a vessel

¹⁷⁸ (Hastings: Reality Street), 45.

after an item of woman's clothing, and in the context of such a tale, renders even further female representation as partial and skewed. Clair Obscur is a figurehead / flâneuse who has access to all locations: city, sea, sky; dimensions of time and space. She 'steers' herself and the reader via the trope and device of the laser and hologram presents a re/presentation of these and models the process of flâneuserie.

2.8 Nicole Brossard and Flâneuserie

There are times when I walk in Montréal for pleasure,
as if I were in a strange city. The city remains for me
a place of creative flânerie. I have always thought that
cities were like mythic jungles for writers; we clear a path
for ourselves, we dream, we play around with an
infinite number of small desires and simple joys.¹⁷⁹

Just as Nicole Brossard looked for unexpected and unusual perspectives on the city as she walked around Montréal I intend the experience of reading *Equinoctial* to offer up different ways of looking through the idea of the hologram and Clair Obscur's quest through and beyond it. Clair appears towards the end of 'Right Eye/The Ekphrastic Museum' section, and takes both me and the reader on a journey through the collection and a voyage through space and time. At times I make a clear-cut separation between Clair and myself as poets; at others, there is a doubling of identities. Throughout there is a preoccupation of a movement from 'surface' to 'depth' which the hologram facilitates and which is linked positively with ideas of 'wholeness' of the identity of the woman poet / artist. Denise Riley interrogates spatial metaphors that continually privilege 'depth' over 'surface':

It is a strange prejudice which sets a higher value on depth than on breadth, and which accepts "superficial" as meaning not of wide extent but "of little depth" whereas "deep", on the other hand, signifies "of great depth" and not "of small surface."¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Forsyth, *Essays*, 29.

She is suspicious of the concept of the “innermost self” and of what cannot be perceived outwardly, from the surface of the skin, and tis herefore suspicious of the concept of “depth” so often being privileged over that of “surface”:

I see out, not in. My eyes swivel outwards, to where all that
is familiar to me lies. To be flat doesn't ... mean that I see
everything, plainly and dully in my panopticon's view.
Espousing externality does not mean boredom, and what
is one-dimensional retains its mysteries.¹⁸¹

Writing ‘the self’ is frequently problematic, in that ‘interiority’ is often ‘written’ from the outside. I take Riley’s over-riding thesis to be that we can only be certain of the ‘reality’ that is presented to us via the senses. It is difficult to block “what arrives from the outside”¹⁸² and acknowledges that “self-description” is a “hopelessly flawed endeavor”;¹⁸³ that “our selves will continue to nurse their secret envelopes ... clear plastic envelopes of imagined inner selves which can be then flipped outwards.”¹⁸⁴ The idea that a person may possess several selves is the basis of Frank O’Hara’s ‘In Memory of My Feelings,’ from which Riley quotes the opening lines:

My quietness has a man in it, he is transparent
and he carries me quietly, like a gondola through the streets.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁰ *The Words of Selves: Identification, Solidarity, Irony* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 46.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 48, *Collected Poems*, ed. Donald Allen (Berkeley / Los Angeles / London: University of California, 1995), 252.

It is an extraordinary poem which suggests that several selves, from different locations and time periods, coexist through the passage of time. This recalls Judith A. Deitch's reading of the lyrical 'I' in Shakespeare's sonnets and its relation to other pronominals in the poems that suggests a multiplicity of 'selves' and a 'dimensionality' that leads her to refer to them as holograms. O'Hara's poem lends itself to a similar holographic reading. Riley's espousing of 'breadth' and the flat surface is equally as useful as O'Hara's multiplicity of selves in his long poem and Deitch's composite images of the lyric 'I' in the sonnets for an understanding of the spatiotemporal movements of Clair Obscur. 'Surface' is a limited perspective in the poems in as much that in the context of The Ekphrastic Museum it is where muses are made and confined in surrealist art although Denise Riley gives 'breadth' a convincing hearing. Clair attains 'wholeness' via the journey through the hologram; through the four dimensions of breadth, depth, height and time. The metaphor of transparent 'secret envelopes' of selves is useful to me in conveying the relationship between myself as poet and Clair Obscur. Clair grants me permission not to pretend to a 'unified' lyric 'I' and to present more than one 'self' in the poems; also, to not feel the need to suppress the expression of emotion, my own and that of others, and on behalf of others. My rewriting of O'Hara goes some way to expressing the relationship between myself and Clair.

My 'experiencing' has a woman in it, she is transparent
and she leads me surely like a figurehead through the streets.

The travelling in *Equinoctial* is anchored in specific cities which have particular significance for me: London (Greenwich), site of the hologram; Leicester, my home; Belfast, my father's birthplace. Nicole Brossard says that she associates 'the city' with "movement, with spectacle, with circulation ... also with acceleration and with

fragmentation ... each time you must reconstitute the coherence of the whole.”¹⁸⁶ I interpret this as a ‘holographic’ reading of the city. My poems arise as the result of physical and mental journeys, and a reading ‘through the hologram’ that encourages a viewing of individual ‘parts’ (poems or episodes in poems) as containing the ‘whole’ (collection / journey / experience as poet / researcher).

In *The Aerial Letter* Nicole Brossard refers to “identity as a science-fiction of self” (AL, 67) and by this I think she means that it is subject to re-configurations by the potentiating means of new technologies like holography, and that it is “simultaneously a quest for and a conquest of meaning” (AL, 67). For me Brossard provides an ideological feminist palimpsestic overlaying of Kac’s holopoetry project which literally took words into four dimensions. The ‘aerial letter’ is the feminist equivalent of a new syntax which operates at borders and in moments of transition to counter what has so far been proscribed for women in reading and writing practices, so that “the border between what’s tolerable and intolerable disintegrates” (AL, 68) and:

... words make themselves void of sense, or take on
another meaning; take a new turn ... begin to turn round
on themselves inciting reflection.

(AL, 68)

Brossard refers to “the matrix material” of her writing where “realities ... cross over each other” and women attain “aerial vision”, as a result which “arises from the body and emotion of thought ... text matter, like a fabulous mathematics, relates words to one another” (AL, 68). The poems in *Equinoctial* conflate “holopoem” and “aerial letter” in poetry which foregrounds the sensory experience of flâneuserie and allows me to explore a version of Brossard’s statement that “all bodies carry within

¹⁸⁶ Forsyth, *Essays*, 29.

themselves a project of high sensuality; writing is its hologram” (AL, 68). My version of this is that ‘all the selves of the body of the woman poet / artist attain sensual and emotional dimensions via the hologram’.

In *Picture Theory* Brossard employs formal properties of the hologram in formulating the novel’s structure. Translator Barbara Godard writes in the Preface that as text “it develops a narrative that functions as a hologram through a combinatory in which each unit is constantly redeveloped in new structures.” (PT, 9). This connects with my first reckonings with the properties of holograms as ground for compositional experiments: the idea of each individual part of a hologram containing the whole. Godard’s assertions that Brossard’s “virtual woman becomes actualized in the future as a hologram” (PT, 9) and that the novel’s structure illustrates Bohm’s model of the holographic universe, “the operation of folding; an unfolding to infinity” (PT, 9) are bold ones; they fuel my suspicion, mentioned earlier, about applying the word ‘holographic’ very broadly to experiments with form and / or space on the page. However, on the other hand, I have also found that using scientific concepts for literary purposes is most successful if those concepts are applied as imaginatively as possible, and especially so if ‘experimentation’ is the underpinning creative process.

My Holographic Flâneuse, Clair Obscur, has connections with Brossard’s protagonist in *Picture Theory*, Claire Dérive. They share a similar first name that denotes clarity of vision; their second names denoting ‘obscurity’ and ‘drift’ respectively, suggesting a condition of obscurity (or occlusion); a way out of it, via indirect routes, flâneuserie. I am persuaded by Katharine Conley’s view that, “derive”, along with hologram, is *Picture Theory*’s “emblematic” word; that “the intellectual space of the novel drifts (and) turns around the reader like a translucent scarf, leaving an impression of having traversed a geographic space in which

overlapping realities co-exist.”¹⁸⁷ A “translucent scarf” binds while it gives the illusion of freedom: I employ an image of skeins of silk that also becomes a metaphor for the unravelling of my research but which also suggests indeterminacy about the nature of realities found and conclusions reached. Brossard’s ‘intertextual’ references in *Picture Theory*, (including James Joyce, Djuna Barnes, Gertrude Stein, Wittgenstein), serve to position her experimental text within the context of other modernist experiments, and, in the spirit of “jouissance”¹⁸⁸ (prevalent in the writings of Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva) according to Conley, imbue the work “with a surplus of sensuality.”¹⁸⁹ The hologram as a technology of perception has opened up ‘the sensual’ as a field for poetic excavation and creation in as much as what is seen depends on the spatial position of the body; it is sensed as both material and immaterial at the same time; emotional impact arises in the viewer from its ‘spectral’ nature. Eduardo Kac relied upon the dual sensual and emotional potential of the hologram for the development and reception of his holopoetry. My broader contexts likewise are modernist; in this case, art and literature.

Susan Knutson adopts a narratological approach in her interpretation of Brossard’s *Picture Theory*, noting “the indigenous narrative form of the journey (or ‘quest’)” as its “point of departure”.¹⁹⁰ She refers to a specific narrative section where the five female protagonists travel from their homes in Québec and New York to enjoy their summer vacations together in an island off Cape Cod. She construes this

¹⁸⁷ Forsyth, *Essays*, 123.

¹⁸⁸ I use this word in the sense Roland Barthes uses it –to denote simultaneous ‘reading’ two types of ‘text’ at once: “Text of Pleasure ... linked to a comfortable practice of reading. Text of Bliss ... implies a sense of loss- brings to a crisis (the reader’s) relation with language.”, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), 14. Nicole Brossard, drawing on Barthes, uses the word “ecstasy” to denote a similar quality.

¹⁸⁹ Forsyth, *Essays*, 133.

¹⁹⁰ ‘Protean Travelogue in Nicole Brossard’s *Picture Theory*: Feminist Desire and Narrative Form’, *Modern Language Studies*, Vol. 27. No. 3 / 4 (Autumn-Winter, 1997), 197.

as “a quest-voyage”, but one which avoids replicating notions of “quest” and “hero” which in the “quest narrative form” has always involved “the cultural reproduction of patriarchal gender”.¹⁹¹ This is, argues, Knutson, “displaced as a determinant structure by the hologram”.¹⁹² Besides features already mentioned (e.g. ‘parts to the whole’; multiple viewpoints and ‘intertexts’), there is no forward-moving narrative propelled by the actions of a hero, rather the women, “do little more than read books, prepare meals and eat them, visit a beach ... venture to a nightclub”.¹⁹³ These are circular, sensual, emotional and intellectual acts based on ‘drift’; from such an example, I take into my project the possibility of working within an alternative feminist quest structure that takes from all of these domains via acts of flâneuserie.

This found poem, constructed from a text by Robert Macfarlane, in which he describes the term, ‘Psychogeography’¹⁹⁴ and how to use it as an approach for encountering a city, was an early investigation of flâneuserie as method.

Walking the circle

A beginner’s guide.
 Unfold a street map, place a glass
 anywhere, draw around it
 then go into the city

keep as close as you can to the curve
 record
 in whatever medium you favour
 catch the textual run-off of streets or routes
 graffiti, branded litter,
 bits of talk

cut for sign

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 199.

¹⁹² Ibid., 198.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Robert Macfarlane, ‘A Road of One’s Own’, *Times Literary Supplement*, October, 2007, in Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography*, (London: Pocket Essentials, 2010), 9.

log data
be alert

to happenstance
of metaphors
visual rhymes
coincidences

all the changing moods of the street

complete the circle
and the record ends

This has its roots in the term, ‘dérive’, as set out in Guy Debord’s *International Situationiste* in 1957. Born out of more avant-garde movements (Surrealists / Lettrists), and out of disillusion with political stasis, Situationism moved away from its earlier “playful” spirit to become “a radical political organisation keen to overthrow and replace what it saw as the predominately bourgeois nature of western society”.¹⁹⁵ Dérive is described in scientific terms:

A mode of experimental behavior linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of transient passage through various ambiances ...¹⁹⁶

Debord, in his later essay ‘Theory of the Dérive’, distinguishes it from notions of “the journey and the stroll”, and, unlike the wanderings of the flâneur, is a “strategic device for reconnoitering the city”, as a preparation for revolutionary change.¹⁹⁷ He describes how the city could be separated into zones, corresponding to the various emotional responses they evoke:

The sudden change of ambiance in the street within the space of a few meters; the evident division of a city into zones of distinct psychic atmospheres; ...

¹⁹⁵ Coverley, *Psychogeography*, 92.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 93.

¹⁹⁷ Ken Knabb, ed., *Situationist Internationalist Anthology* (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981) in Coverley, *Psychogeography*, 2010, 96-97.

the appealing or repelling character of certain places ...¹⁹⁸

The suggestion here is that the places evoke the emotions. This, in my subjective experience, may be true, but there are other factors, such as how much a person projects an emotion on a place, or how much other people affect another person's experience of city wandering. My flâneuserie is more open to happenstance as a means of gaining experience in a city for writing poetry and in accumulating and investigating associated sources.

Artist Helen Scalway's account of her walks through London streets highlights "their multiple obstacles, both physical and social, for a woman"¹⁹⁹ Scalway sets out to investigate whether there can be such a person as a "contemporary flâneuse" in her subjective experiential study. She operates what she refers to as "counter-flâneuserie", moving from the outskirts (north-west London) to the centre of the city (where flânerie would traditionally take place) which to her means, "Zone One, within the gold of the yellow Circle Line. The pleasure center, cinemas, parks, cafes, shops, markets, museums, monuments (her italics)." ²⁰⁰ The various "obstacles" along the way she identifies as male: fast cyclists; a group who she refers to as "*stopped* people", "unemployed youths claiming their space by their demeanor, probably because they have no space anywhere ...; the homeless, the beggars, the drugged, drunk, deranged, predatory; other victims of care in the community." ²⁰¹ She expresses discomfiture at actually being *visible*; notes that she cannot stand still without "acting props" (a watch to look at, a map), and that to do so, especially if the

¹⁹⁸ Coverley, *Psychogeography*, 89-90.

¹⁹⁹ D' Souza & McDonough, *Invisible Flâneuse*, 14.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 164.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 165.

street is crowded, “is to become an obstacle ...”²⁰² There are forbidding architectural structures she has to navigate: an underpass under Westway; a subway, “a hell-mouth”; a railway bridge. Her senses are sharpened and alert for perceived danger; to avoid potentially ‘unsafe’ places often involves circuitous alternative routes, “doubling back ... a number of weavings, ...”²⁰³ Overall, Scalway does not know how to ‘be’, noting that, “Outsider/insider is a border the flâneuse must skirmish on constantly ...”²⁰⁴; it is an activity which activates acute sensitivities and self-consciousness. Scalway even contemplates what refuge “under the disguise of beggary”, might be like, only to conclude that, “To take refuge in appearances ... is irrelevant, dishonest, just not useful. I must path build *for the inward people I am* (my italics).”²⁰⁵ In short, Scalway did not know what ‘self’ to adopt, when navigating the city, and in exercising a “counter-flânerie”, her conclusions about whether or not there could actually be spaces of “resistance” for a contemporary flâneuse are ambivalent. Yet, despite her sense of threat and displacement (maybe her reduction of the cast of ‘others’ in the street, ‘the dispossessed’, as a tableau of stereotypes is a device to play up the contrasts in her personal experience), she admits, “there was still a sense of pleasure in the street.”²⁰⁶ She connects the way she walks, “looking for spaces to slip through and round, weaving and threading a path through that opens and closes, darting, dodging and dancing, two-stepping, giving way, persistently returning”, with the making of her art; “the tactility of walking and the tactility of

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid., 162.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 165.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 166.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 170.

drawing.”²⁰⁷ The act of shifting her gaze allows Scalway to find “unfixed space” (as opposed to the ‘bounded’ street space) in what she refers to as “odd elsewhere places” (the sky, a “snowdome” bought in a tourist shop) allowing a “flânerie through the city’s dreamspaces and nospaces.”²⁰⁸

Scalway’s account of her physical and emotional reactions on walking in the city as a woman resonate for me as I was aware of my vulnerability yet, at the same time, felt a sense of freedom; the excitement of venturing out to collect ‘sensory’ material for my writing project. In London, for instance, I preferred to explore on foot, using the GPS map on my phone, for guidance. The camera on my phone ‘captured’ the views that my gaze could not hold. I allowed myself to drift, but within roughly defined mental borders. In Greenwich, this meant West Greenwich, between and inside the various museums; Greenwich Park, (a mile circumference around The Royal Observatory); the Thames walkway, a mile either way. I was prompted by Robert Macfarlane’s suggestion to put a glass down on an OS map, trace around the circumference, and walk the circle although the circle was a mental rather than an actual one.

Scalway’s was an artistic project: “to produce an atlas: an A-Z of the sensations of walking through London, an A-Z of slippage that would confound the classification implied within the notion of the atlas.”²⁰⁹ In doing so, she has ‘written’ her ‘text’ of the city (in her writing and drawing recording her perceptions), and so in ‘writing back’ *against* some of the constraints she had found as a woman, effected ‘flâneuserie’. “Making an effort to be normal, that’s what it is to be colonized”, asserts Nicole Brossard, acknowledging the need, “to cut a path through the trickery,

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

the obvious, the effects of conditioning” (AL, 39). It was in the “odd elsewhere spaces” of the city where Scalway felt most self-conscious and that the city was potentially hostile to a woman who wandered its streets without apparent purpose. Her anxieties about how to ‘be’: to ‘be normal’ were transmuted into her artistic project and when this happens, to my mind, women artists start to “cut through the trickery.”

Maybe Helen Scalway had Virginia Woolf’s 1930 essay, ‘Street Haunting: A London Adventure’ in mind. Woolf set out on the pretext of buying a pencil just as Scalway sets out with drawing tools to collect material for her project. Both women embrace the serendipitous: Woolf’s stance is more observational; Scalway’s more broadly sensory. From both accounts, I take away a sense of imaginative freedom, rather than restriction, a freedom which comes when the walker allows their attention to lose focus and relax without conscious thought. For Woolf, this comes in how she feels herself transformed as she steps out of the house into, “a central oyster of perceptiveness, an enormous eye.”²¹⁰ Woolf momentarily imagines herself on a balcony in Mayfair, wearing pearls, having entered a life of riches and status: “We seem to be riding on top of the mast of the tallest ship: and yet at the same time we know nothing of this sort matters ...”²¹¹ She reflects on the idea of dual consciousness, “... we are walking to the Strand to buy a pencil. How, then are we also on a balcony, wearing pearls in June?”,²¹² and on the nature of the “true self”:

Is the true self this which stands on the pavement
in January, or that which bends over the balcony in
June? Am I here, or am I there? Or is the true self
neither this nor that, neither here nor there, but

²¹⁰ in *The Death of the Moth and other Essays*, 43. at <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/virginia/w91d/index.html> last accessed 25th September 2016.

²¹¹ Ibid., 53.

²¹² Ibid.

something so varied and wandering that it is only
when we give rein to its wishes and let it take its way
unimpeded that we are indeed ourselves?²¹³

This suggests that being outside, the condition of ‘wandering’ facilitates mental ‘voyaging’ through time and space. Woolf further construes this idea of multiplicity of identities in a metaphor from painting, “... we are streaked, variegated, all of a mixture; the colours have run.”²¹⁴ With respect to art and ways of seeing and her *flâneuserie*, Woolf’s story employs a notional ekphrasis derived from art and photography as she captures how light transmutes and transfixes where windows, lamps, reflective surfaces become lenses which magnify, “the bright paraphernalia of the streets.”²¹⁵ Janet Wolff cites Woolf’s story as an example of the language of ghosts and haunting in twentieth-century literature about the city which serves as an exploration of “the uncanny, the repressed and the ghostly”, that is, the precariousness of female identity in urban spaces.²¹⁶ Feminist geographer, Dorothy Massey, recalls bus journeys she took as a child around Manchester, and how, seen from the top of the bus, the “huge stretch of the Mersey flood plain” was “like a scene from a vast, animated Lowry painting” which “had been given over to boys”.²¹⁷ Although Clair Obscur is a spectral presence, it is the passage through the hologram that renders her and other woman less so.

The form and ideas behind Denise Riley’s poem ‘A drift,’ that suggest “both the situationist *dérive* and the state of being lost” (EC, 32) influenced compositional decisions for my poem ‘Adrift’ (E, 93). The opening of Riley’s poem, is the artist /

²¹³ Ibid., 54.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 46.

²¹⁶ D’ Souza & McDonough, *Invisible Flâneuse*, 27.

²¹⁷ *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 185.

writer, inscribing her method on the poem, “Move swift as a blur a fast drawn finger’s smudge a / corner of the eye’s unsteady streak a smear of nothing / solid ...”²¹⁸ This is at once a collision of the optical and tactile. There is gender politics at play:

These sentences come fast, give me no grief –does that mean
that their whole tone is false and that their flow slid out
of some cheap ease machine? Oh how that man do howl.²¹⁹

In places the poem hurtles along; its lineation inhabits a space that almost looks like prose. I interpret her, “give me no grief” as a retort to male critics and poets who suspect and probably envy her singular style, a “cheap ease machine” denoting a perceived lack of seriousness. Nowhere is this overt, and it is contrary to Riley’s writings elsewhere on the subject,²²⁰ but I read this as the kind of ‘grief’ women poets have experienced from men who assume an ‘authority’, and who ‘police’ the writing and would keep the women in a ‘safe’, that is, unthreatening, space; keep them ‘at home’. Maybe the “howl” is a reference to Allen Ginsberg’s poem of the same name, as an example of male writerly over-indulgence. In the final section of Riley’s poem the first word signals a slowing of pace:

Wait, lean from the topmost window, see over this city
in its gravely vigorous life the moon hung orange in the
humming sky, the deeply breathing the electric air ...²²¹

These vivid foci remind me of the idea in Woolf’s story that the self / selves are everywhere; here is a panoramic view yet what is received is palpable not static. This is denoted by the word ‘vigorous’, and the accumulation of other sensorial phrases that suggest a charged presence: “humming sky”, “electric air”, “dropping

²¹⁸ *Selected Poems* (Hastings: Reality, 2000), 68.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 69.

²²⁰ e.g. ‘The falseness of my persona telling its tale resounds in my own ears despite my best attempts at accuracy, and how ever plausible it may sound to its audience’, *Words of Selves*, 61.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, Riley, *Selected Poems*, 68.

glow”.²²² The “single traveler” who “flies home through everything inside one life, its / fearful hesitations, pouncing leaps of speed; ...” is the woman poet, ‘writing back’ against male so-called ‘authorities’²²³ which would seek to block such flight and occlude the poet and her poetries. According to Zöe Skoulding, Denise Riley’s poetry “negotiates moments of intersection between language and embodiment”, and that “the experience of shared spaces resonates through (her) work” (EC, 31-32). “The odd elsewhere”, Helen Scalway’s phrase, is a useful one for describing the space of Denise Riley’s poetry, Barbara Guest’s also, and my own in the poems in *Equinoctial*. Zöe Skoulding quotes the poet Lisa Robertson, “Sometimes I think that the entire history of perceiving is encoded in a city”,²²⁴ noting that, nevertheless, “in poetry’s relationship with urban space the perceptions and practices of women writers have on the whole been less visible than those of their male counterparts.”²²⁵ Her study is of women writers whose work may be considered ‘experimental’ which she argues is a broader term than either ‘innovative’ or ‘avant-garde’ and better conveys its “ambiguous relationships to scientific process, experience and chance”;²²⁶ something of this ambiguity I have discussed in the Introduction, in relation to my own use of the term.

I began this section with reference to Nicole Brossard’s “creative flânerie” and how this characterized how she viewed her walking around Montréal. I have modified Brossard’s term and have given examples of what I recognise, in the writings of

²²² Ibid.

²²³ I extend this to refer to various institutional practices which are “bounded”, often in ways which are gendered e.g. “place” of women in “art”; in “the academy”.

²²⁴ *Nilling: Prose* (Toronto: Bookthug, 2012), 57, in Skoulding, *Experimental Cities*, 1.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

Scalway, Woolf and Riley, as a 'creative flâneuserie' that is bound up with ontology whereby each asks, 'Who am I in the world?' In each case, the question is addressed, if not fully answered, by transmuting thought, perceptions and emotions into 'art'.

My poetry and poetics have arisen from similar processes of transmutation.

Through Clair, and in espousing the trope of the hologram, I have reckoned with a similar ontological question. I have sought to do this in writing whose ambition, borrowing from Brossard again, is as "a place of pleasure, of quest, a space of dangerous intensity, a space of turbulence having its own dynamic."²²⁷

²²⁷ Forsyth, *Essays*, 20.

Zone Three: *Equinoctial* - An Extended Discussion

3.0 Overview

... the vitality of female culture seems to me related to a system of thought and perceptions which would bring together simultaneously, in three-dimensional forms, the objects of our thought, which until now we have been forced to see only on the surface, without really knowing their volume. It is from the volume of our thought that *integral women* rise up.

(AL, 115)

Nicole Brossard refers to the “volume” of women’s thought, and acts of moving from the “surface” into “three-dimensional forms” in order to become fully-realized in writing as “*integral women*”. Eduardo Kac’s intention behind his invention of holopoems was to enact a ‘visionary’ thinking which went beyond what current two and three-dimensional forms could offer, and which the technology of holography allowed. I discovered only one source that made a link between Nicole Brossard and Eduardo Kac. Carolyn Guertin refers to *Picture Theory* as a “proto-holopoem”, saying that it is, more “holofiction” and “hyperfiction” than “hologram”, enabling the reader “to construct her own plot –just as hyperfictions do”, and, in doing so, chart an individual “visual trajectory of female desire.”²²⁸ Brossard’s construction of multiple layers of ‘narrative’ with the properties of a hologram and the act of viewing it in mind allows for different viewing / reading perspectives.

Brossard and Kac both projected their holographic inventions on the landscape of the 1980s and beyond: both wanted to stretch and test the limits of literary forms, the novel and essay for Brossard, poetry for Kac; both embraced the affordances of science provided by the hologram, figuratively in Brossard’s case, literally, in Kac’s. Kac sought to harness new media in ways that reflected ‘non-deterministic’ thinking

²²⁸ Guertin, ‘Three-Dimensional Woman’, 1998.

about the universe; Brossard sought new reading and writing practices that challenged ‘deterministic’ ideologies based on patriarchal thinking. Although these were specifically lesbian practices they operated in the service of women readers and writers in general. Brossard referred to these women as “urban radicals”. Guertin’s conflation of Kac and Brossard’s work, especially in the idea of the ‘three-dimensional woman’, prefigures my own conflation of their work in developing new ekphrastic poetry in response to investigations of the holographic.

In Zone One and Two I have discussed the three research areas, Ekphrasis, Holography and Flâneuserie, and how, combined in the prose section of the thesis, they have the function of poetics and, as such, serve as a mid-point between critical reflection and the creative acts; a work of ‘in-between-ness’ that recalls the hologram and its liminal status within holographic space. They signify a ‘manifesto-like’ signalling of intent, even though they are not as ‘fixed’ statements in a typical manifesto might suggest. I have emphasized the symbiotic relationship between poetry and poetics; how the latter is extrapolated from the former and vice versa. Importantly, I have elaborated upon my methodology, ‘flâneuserie’, which has originated particularly from scholarly, poetic and novelistic works by Nicole Brossard, Barbara Guest and Rachel Blau DuPlessis. In Zone Three I elaborate on compositional decisions for the poetry in *Equinoctial*. There will be, inevitably, some overlap with previous discussions. In the processes involved in reflection on practice, the iterative nature of such reflections are an important part of that process.

3.1 *Equinoctial*:The Title

Our surroundings were three-dimensions our bodies
experienced clairvoyantly to the full extent of our
memories...

(PT, 54)

The title of my collection arose from several premises. During 2013, I attended a series of poetry workshops run by *The Poetry Business* in Sheffield. One of the activities involved making up a poetic form. With this in mind, I invented the *Equinoctial* and set out its 'rules' on my blog.²²⁹ At this stage I was mostly concerned with the idea of 'equinox' denoting hours of equal daylight and darkness. However, I had in mind a particular equinox: the date in March when the Greenwich holograms were made. My proposed form emphasized a shift from one state to another (normally this would be from mentions of light to darkness or vice versa but I deliberately kept it open), and with the suggested layout:

- 24 lines
- A discernible shift from one state to its opposite/oppositional in either/and/or subject and form.
- A notable 'hinge' or 'portal' line when the shift happens
- 2 distinct parts comprising one of the following arrangements:
- Two stanzas of 12 lines each (*or* 6 stanzas: 6 x 3 x 6 x 6 x 3 x 6 *or* 8 stanzas of 3 lines)²³⁰

The layout gave a framework. I included additional restraints I placed upon the form (i.e a series of random end-words, repeated in reverse order in the second part of the poem, highlighted below) enabled me to 'use' the form for reflecting on Greenwich, the laser, the hologram; Richardson's 'story'.

²²⁹ <http://pamthompsonpoetry.com/2013/04/09/experimental-form-equinoctial/> last accessed 25th September 2016.

²³⁰ Ibid.

Equinoctial

That night in March, the steep path, the *storm*,
inauspicious, and then the sight of *raindrops*
passing through the green meridian *laser*
and as they did so, turned into *emeralds*,
and a moon dipped in and out of a *cloud*.
The timekeeper slept, pulseless, the *watch*
that on a long voyages on rough seas *never*
lost more than a few seconds. How *incredible*,
then, to surround it with light, such *intense*
attention to its amenable face, they *amaze*
themselves, fraught minutes, it's *over*,
elation, then it's sealed again inside *glass*.

Seven years , another March, I peer into glass
at the hologram, and could wander here over
and over again , so transfixed am I and they amaze
me by saying reflected light bounces off it, intense
properties of an object that's real, incredible
that it's there but not, and that you could never
lift it out of the case, turn it around, this watch,
simulcrum, for ever. The plates need cleaning, a cloud
of pink, oxide, taints the surfaces. These emerald
artefacts gleam as if through water, the laser
was the best, a green diode, jewels like raindrops,
here, like Harrison's dream, safe from any storm.

This is a working draft and is not included in the final collection. It was an important 'pre-text' in which I began to find a form for recording first impressions of the holograms and ideas arising. It is a precursor for other experiments with forms which have repetition of end words as a part of their structure (e.g. 'Postcards from Belfast' (E, 38-39), 'Adhuc' (E, 97-98) and for reckonings with the word 'equinoctial'.

'Equinoctial' refers to the 'celestial equinox' (an 'aerial' equivalent of the equator) and is also the name of a tropical storm which occurs around the equator. Such a conflation of these meanings suitably resonated with my project exploring 'the holographic' as an 'unsettled space'—recognized as such by Kac and Brossard—as a new space for poetry. Two literal dates near spring equinoxes

provided symmetry for the project: the night in March, 2008, when the Greenwich holograms were made and the day in March, 2013, when I first viewed them. This symmetry gave added permission for my creative experiments to circulate around the holograms; the time-lapse period in between the dates of their making and my viewing, and in the idea of one time period being superimposed over another.

I decided on the final structure for *Equinoctial* relatively late into the research. This decision could not have been made sooner. Iterative processes needed to be worked through. Hazel Smith refers to different ways of “making structures.”²³¹ A writer might make a systematic plan and work to it as a “skeleton design” to help the generation of ideas; or, as the writing continues, a structure might generate and regenerate itself as part of the process of writing “as a particular type of textual patterning and organization starts to emerge.”²³² The latter is what happened in my case. The structure of *Equinoctial* is somewhere in between, in Smith’s terms, the “conservative” and “adventurous”, the former being more “closed”, leaning towards conventional models of organising poetry collections with list of contents, followed by an ordering of poems with linear sequential patterning; the latter, more “open”, and which “broaden (s) the scope of the writing and maximize(s) the plurality and complexity of the meaning: its psychological and political import”²³³ I was interested in how other poets had departed from “conservative” structures in their collections. Robert Sheppard’s collagistic interweaving and assembling of texts from his oeuvre in *Twentieth-Century Blues* (2008)²³⁴ provided an example of what seems

²³¹ *The Writing Experiment: Strategies for Innovative Creative Writing* (New South Wales: Allan & Unwin, 2005), 49.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ (Cambridge: Salt)

on one level to be a random layering and juxtaposition of individual and sequences of poems but through which a timeline has been plotted by which to steer the reader. In *Good Science* (1992)²³⁵ Ken Edwards begins with a Preface which collages quotations from writers including Guillaume Apollinaire, Lyn Hejinian, Hélène Cixous and Frank O' Hara. This signals a self-imposed procedural approach and allows the reader to take from it what they will for the reading of the poems. The word 'fetch', as title of Tamar Yoseloff's (2007) collection²³⁶ has a double meaning, as 'trick or artifice' and 'an apparition or double of a living person'. Four poems with the title of 'Fetch' introduce different sections of the collection. Yoseloff alternates between the pronominals 'I' and 'she', both across and within poems. Similar shifts of perspective operate in *Equinoctial* via the reverberations of the title's different meanings and in the persona of the Holographic Flâneuse and an associated 'sleight of selves' as mentioned in the Preface. It was important that the trope of the hologram and its associated processes should be at the forefront. The invention of the Holographic Flâneuse (Clair Obscur) provided a breakthrough in the project; a coherent means of linking poetic and scholarly domains and in foregrounding the creative act of 'flâneuserie' and thus a feminist orientation. Her name, Clair Obscur, conflates Barbara Guest's association of the term with the imagination; with Nicole Brossard's protagonist in *Picture Theory*, Claire Dérive²³⁷ and with the notion of 'drift'. This is a movement 'towards', a 'coming into being', that particularly relates to Section Two of the novel where, on vacation, Claire and four other women, journey towards a significant place away from home for towards 'wholeness' as women, as lovers, readers and writer. It is both an act of convergence and of integration. The idea

²³⁵ (New York: Roof Books)

²³⁶ See page 155.

of gaining ‘convergent’ vision after juggling two opposing ‘ways of seeing’ became a further useful structural metaphor for me as female poet / researcher. I felt I was attempting to reconcile personal and academic concerns in pursuing practice-based research, and, at the same time, working ‘alongside’ other female poets, scholars and artists staking claims for ‘visibility’ and agency within gendered reading and writing practices which sought to occlude and exclude them.

In order to attain convergent vision, what is viewed in the right eye and that viewed in the left eye must coincide; Eduardo Kac stressed that in holopoetry, binocular reading occurred whereby each eye received separate inputs (“disparity”) which meant that two people looking at the same combination of letters and words in a holopoem would each see something different because the way those words behaved in holographic space. New formations would appear whose meanings were outside known syntax. These effects are peculiar to the medium and not able to be translated into a verbal system that applied to the page (H, 57). These holographic reading and writing principles were behind my decision to arrange sets of poems under three main headings (‘Right Eye’, ‘Left Eye’, ‘Convergence’) and associated sub-headings (‘The Ekphrastic Museum’, ‘Through the Hologram’, ‘Glory Sky-Shell’) according to how groups of poems might be “shaped” into a scheme whereby the Holographic Flaneuse journeys towards a fourth dimension.

The first two sections, ‘Right Eye’ and ‘Left Eye’, present different topographies to the reader and are bridged by the necessary “birth” of Clair towards the end of the group of poems in the first section, under the heading ‘The Ekphrastic Museum’. The poems here pre-date the birth of Clair and largely comprise ekphrastic dialogues with art and ekphrastic practices that have excluded women or rendered them “other” and without agency. Central to this section are dialogues with the muse-making preoccupations of surrealist art and with women and city spaces, or other places

where streets and interiors are freighted with gendered implications. My dialogues expose practices of male artists and poets during the early years of modernism, who, in disrupting orthodox methods of conveying perspective and narrative, replicate the flâneur's appropriating gaze whereby the perspective is two-dimensional and the women are 'flattened'. Nicole Brossard and Rachel Blau DuPlessis have noted this and forged alternative precedents. I am acknowledging these female modernist readings in my versions. Even when art reaches for a third-dimension, for instance in the forms of assemblage, sculpture, installation, similar conditions prevail and need specific gendered interventions to alter them. Throughout this project there have been tensions between issues of personal and artistic freedom and control that I have sought to embrace rather than sidestep.

Sometimes my own 'self' and Clair's coincide in the poems; sometimes they are separate; there are times when Clair is absent that I adopt a more seemingly 'omniscient' stance to report on instances in poems that lead towards her origin, and the circumstances that signal her necessity. I have adjusted my use of pronominals to give the reader a better sense of the trajectory of Clair's journey 'through the hologram'. However, *overall* I intended a blurring of identity of poet and 'persona' to demonstrate that transformations from one state of being to another are uneasy and not clear-cut.

3.1 i Preface (E, 14)

A Preface orientates the reader. This one is a ‘meta-poem’; a skeletal version of the poetics. Other poetry collections including poetics as preface or essay and which informed my inclusion of this Preface poem, ‘Viewing the Holopoem’ (E,14) were *Good Science* by Ken Edwards, already mentioned, and Simon Perril’s *Nitrate* (2010),²³⁸ subtitled ‘An Essay on Cinema’; the latter also has a Preface, in the form of a poem, that functions as an ‘argument’ for the collection.²³⁹ ‘Viewing the Holopoem’ signals how my collection is to be ‘read’. Like Perril, I want to make a claim for poetry as a medium of research so do not intend to paraphrase the poem other than give some contextual background from Eduardo Kac’s theory of holopoetry. The viewing of holograms and holopoems yields unique perspectives for individual viewers. As the viewer moves in front of a holopoem, different formations of words and letters occur. This is the “transitional zone”. Kac explains that often word formations will be ‘outside’ semantics. He gives an example:

... if you think of metal and sugar, there isn’t
a word that clearly defines the mid-point between
those two ideas. Why is that relevant?
Well, that’s what poetry is all about...

(H, 94)

The Preface presses towards an ‘oscillatory’ reading of the collection whereby contending tensions that arise in the poems (‘left eye, right eye’) can be reckoned with both individually, and, via the hologram, simultaneously. “Energies and collisions” inherent in such a reading are manifest in poems which are organic, “phototosynthetic poems / in three dimensions”, in that they derive predominately from a medium of green, laser light as their generative source. The phrase, “photosynthetic poems”

²³⁸ (Cambridge: Salt)

²³⁹ Ibid., 1.

suggests a kind of ‘poetry DNA’ which is a fusion of the natural and the technological. I also had in mind another work of Eduardo Kac’s, not a holopoem but *Alba*, what Kac refers to as a “transgenic artwork”, an albino rabbit containing genes of a luminous jellyfish, and, as a result, glowed green under certain lights-conditions.²⁴⁰ The poems in *Equinoctial* effect processes of refraction through which identities, ‘sleight of selves,’ are reconfigured. The Preface’s concluding lines, “Clouds race in Chicago. / In Rio the skies are still.”, refer to a phenomenon noted by Eduardo Kac (H, 93). The more turbulent weather of the US signified the restless energies he wanted to bring to his poetry; a fusion of the natural and technological. I wanted the Preface to convey a similar understanding for the reading of my poems.

3.2 Right Eye / The Ekphrastic Museum (E, 15)

This first group of poems, as the structure suggests, to be viewed with the Right Eye perspective, is tangential to the discussion of ‘the museum’ in Zone Two. The idea of women (as models or muses) being trapped within paintings is set in motion by the complex gender politics in the opening poem ‘A Peepshow with Views of the Interior of a Dutch House 1655-60’. (E, 16). This is elaborated upon in various ways in four poems which have their basis in surrealist art: ‘Hope at 4am’ (E, 18), ‘The Grey Forest’, (E, 19), ‘Melancholy and Mystery of a Street’ (E, 20), ‘Slubbed’, (E, 21). In the sequence, ‘Silent City’ (E, 21), there is a shift from the spatial medium of painting to the time-based medium of film. The ten poems comprising ‘Holiday Interiors’ (E, 28-37) are dialogues with the artistic convention of “the interior” signalled in the opening poem, and with the idea of poem as “installation”. ‘Postcards from Belfast’ (E, 38-39) offers the idea of poem as postcard while at the same time drawing attention to the technologies that modify and reproduce ‘art’. The three

²⁴⁰ <http://www.ekac.org/gfpbunny.html>

aforementioned poems are set in places of particular personal significance. The next group of poems ('Stage-set' (E, 40), 'The Notebook of Improper Desires' (E, 41-42), 'Mier Bitte' (E, 43), 'Assemblage' (E, 44) further reflect the shift in modernist art practices from two to three dimensions; from the surface of the canvas to sculpture and installation. 'The Beginning of the World' (E, 45), 'Soft Tissue' (E, 46), and 'The Bite of the Dream Women' (E, 47), feature the emergence of Clair Obscur and a continued grasping for a third dimension which can counter restrictive gendered art (and writing) practices. The final poem in first section 'Opticks' (E, 48-49) (from the title of Isaac Newton's treatise on light) forms a counterpart to the opening poem as it is in dialogue with the same artwork. Lines from Newton's work have been appropriated and disarranged in the poem by means of a 'cut-up' technique derived from Dada signalling, by another means, the impending challenge via the hologram to the certainties of former ways of 'seeing'.

3.2 i A Peepshow with View of the Interior of a Dutch House 1655-60 (E, 17)

This poem was written in response to on an installation in the National Gallery by Samuel Van Hoogstraten, which, within a version of a 'Dutch interior', conventionally frames a woman (or women) within a painted backdrop of a domestic setting. The poem is pivotal to the start of the collection as one which signals the beginning of my ekphrastic dialogues. It is particularly significant as the artwork has optical 'trickery' in its design; a 3D installation, a cabinet which contains a 'flat' two-dimensional inner world. These are paintings on panels, but which have been given dimension by means of lenses and their placement for the viewer. The idea of the artist 'controlling' the spaces of the artwork is brought to the fore. The convention of the 'Dutch interior' in art usually presents a static, sedate scene. Such a scene is often of a woman engaged in domestic activity that the male artist has framed in a vignette.

In the poem responding to Van Hoogstraten's piece, the women are 'imprisoned' inside the box doing domestic work whereas "men in tall hats" sit at a table conversing. "The tame hawk" is "too timid to fly" although the cage door is open. This is a metaphor to suggest being poised on the brink between 'confinement' and 'freedom'; such a positioning recurs throughout the collection. The idea of "eavesdropping" with alternating eyes, uses a word connected with secret listening to suggest the transgressive actions of the two women; "alternating eyes" is also a direct connection with the collection's structure and Kac's description of the features of 'binocular reading'. The "letter on the stairs" is potentially 'aerial'; a gift from one artist to another. The 'insider knowledge' is what I have gained via this research but the situation and shifting identities also mirror my experience of the complexities and uncertainties in positioning myself as female poet and researcher in a practice-led PhD, and finding a form for the project to reflect such complexities and uncertainties. My poem is an unrhymed sonnet; an 'appropriated' sonnet. Catherine Hales writes, "Putting the poem into something resembling conventional form is ... supremely ironic", and that there are "subversive possibilities ... in the tension between the fact of the poem as form ... and the necessary conceptual rejection of form."²⁴¹ This points to a of 'shadowing' the traditional sonnet in which a male poet constructs a love lyric for a female subject. Hales suggests that appropriating the form, while, at the same time, altering it, has subversive possibilities for the woman poet for displacing the male locus of power denoted by the traditional lyric. This is the significance of my appropriation of the sonnet form here.

²⁴¹ Etter, *Infinite Difference*, 63.

This version of the poem has stayed close to my original draft with couplets variously enjambed or end-stopped to reflect the unfolding monologue of the speaker, by one of the two sisters, a relationship of my invention based on noticing that there were two women ‘inside’ the installation.

Barbara Guest has referred to “poetry’s locked kingdom” (FoI, 51): as yet, “the key is out of reach” yet it “tantalises”. Like a hologram. I take the Van Hoogstraten installation as an anagram for the buried and gendered narrative my collection will support. A proto-Clair reaches metaphorically for the letter and the key but time is frozen. We are not travelling through the hologram yet. The sisters are my selves: Clair submerged, the trying on of a self, finding form / s for it or for them. A peepshow is traditionally voyeuristic and designed to titillate, encouraging a more surreptitious viewing than the flaneur’s bold gaze. The poem dramatises gender politics. I intended an assured voice for the speaker such as that of the model in Carol Ann Duffy’s monologue, ‘Standing Female Nude’, which I referred to in Zone Two. The wink of the male artist at the end is ambivalent. Traditionally it is the male artist / writer who keeps women two dimensional to make art; literally here, keeps them “at home” (‘familiar’). I have mentioned earlier,²⁴² how, in his essay, ‘The Uncanny’ (1900), Sigmund Freud makes a distinction between German words in attempting to explain the meaning of the “uncanny” which he describes as:

... ‘*unheimlich*’ ... the opposite of ‘*heimlich*’ [homely], ‘*heimisch*’ [native]—the opposite of what is familiar; ... we are tempted to conclude that what is uncanny is frightening because it is *not* known and familiar.²⁴³

²⁴² On page 169.

²⁴³ Leitch, *Norton Anthology*, 931.

‘Heimlich’ also translates as “belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame ...”

²⁴⁴ The appearance of a hologram is frequently described as “uncanny”. Reaching for the hologram ensures that the women in the poem will not be kept, literally and metaphorically, “at home” and will be rendered “not at home” or ‘unfamiliar’ by means of their subsequent immersion. I deliberately set out to go beyond merely ‘envoicing’ the woman from inside the installation by using her persona to renegotiate the hierarchies implicit in this device and which attracted me to it in the first place; contemplating the holographic allowed me to add ‘dimension’ to the investigation of selves and perspectives which sets the tone for the rest of the collection. This poem has a counterpart in ‘Opticks’, the latter poem, which I discuss later, providing a bridge between this section and the next.

3.2 ii Hope at 4am (E, 18), The Grey Forest (E, 19), Melancholy and Mystery of a Street (E, 20) and Slubbed (E, 21)

The next group of poems, ‘Hope at 4am’, ‘The Grey Forest’, ‘Melancholy and Mystery of a Street’ and ‘Slubbed’ originated from my ekphrastic poetry blog *Heckle* (an online ‘museum’); they reverberate here in a new context. I have used various aleatory methods derived from surrealism and Dada (e.g. automatic writing, cut-up /collage techniques, use of sleep / dream imagery, found objects and texts) in my practice. I was attracted to the idea of bypassing the rational mind to tap into what the unconscious and subconscious might yield for new work. The surrealist project was to push beyond painting; in ekphrastic engagements with holography, mine is also. Pre-*Heckle* I had written poems in relation to the art of Magritte, for instance. At the same time, I felt unease at, what I saw, as the fetishising of women in surrealist art and writings, sometimes violently so; somewhat at odds with a movement that represented-among other things- a liberation of the imagination. Such ‘liberation’, it

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

seemed, belonged to male artists by default. Rachel Blau DuPlessis recognized that in modernism “the contradiction between mythic and historical women took acute and historic shape in surrealism” (BS, 166). In doing so, she cites Simone de Beauvoir’s summary of the dilemma presented by André Breton’s:

“... idealized essence of the feminine and his idealized figure of the erotic femme-enfant: this female figure was not, despite her tremendous iconographic privilege, a female “human-being” but rather an essence, an elemental force, a revelation for others. The figure is not for herself, not a subject with agency, but rather an example of erotic, odd, enigmatic sex-gender formulas.”²⁴⁵

(BS, 166)

Woman were idealized and distanced as muse or model, although, as Du Plessis also observed, notable women artists were evident in the movement, yet were ‘occluded’ and rendered ‘other’, just as Barbara Guest was within the New York School. In the light of De Beauvoir’s claim, DuPlessis draws attention to the contradiction of Guest’s “effervescent awakening via surrealism”; says that subsequent achievements that “occurred on the ground [were] almost entirely cut away by these theories of the female” (BS, 166). It is with these contending views in mind that I undertook ekphrastic dialogues with the art of surrealism. ‘Hope at 4am’ refers to a time (certainly for me) of fretful waking and uneasy dreams. The poem fluctuates between sleep and waking, between what seems real, (“a weightless bir”), and what is illusory (in the “sea / air scene”); what looks like a white bird at the centre of the Yves Tanguy painting of the same name, (1929), is, in fact, an abstract shape. The space of the poem is therefore an intentional ‘liminal’ space such as that a hologram inhabits; seeming solid but is insubstantial. This poem, and others in the group, engage with an art movement and ideology which, on the one hand, declares expanded vision; yet, on the other, represents its opposite at the level of gender politics. There is nod to André

²⁴⁵ *The Second Sex*, H.M. Parshley, trans. and ed. (New York: Knopf, 1953), 222.

Breton by way of his comments in the Surrealist Manifesto (1924), and his novel, *Nadja* (1926); this and Louis Aragon's *Paris Peasant* (1924) are seminal surrealist works of flânerie and illustrate examples of male artists delineating urban space, and 'corralling' women within it by types of 'muse-making'. Concerns with the poem, therefore, connect to different sides of my project. At first I intended that the form of the poem (six long lines, almost as a block of prose in one uncoiling sentence) should read as if it were an extract from a manifesto but one which subverts the genre. It allowed for 'oscillation' as its 'reality', rather than the setting out of absolutes, hence the line "the way that this / slows to a form like suspicion then reverts back to hope again." The manifesto-like intent is still evident in the final form of the poem but I decided that the introduction of a break between sections and enjambment between them would better evoke the act of waking from a dream. The voice of the poem, in retrospect, is Clair (before I really conceived of Clair) who, in sleep, "flashes past like clouds". This poem foreshadows, 'Last night ...' (E, 60) when Clair has emerged.

Marx Ernst describes his discovery of the technique of 'frottage' (a technique , whereby a textured surface is covered with paper and rubbed with a pencil or other drawing instrument) as "a visual obsession" which yielded stimuli for new work and creative insights of an almost hallucinatory nature.²⁴⁶ Ernst discovered that scraping off the surface of a painted canvas could reveal other 'worlds'. I approached 'The Grey Forest' with these techniques in mind for uncovering potential visionary insights: "A forest is a drawing board, a supernatural insect / a bone totem ...". The landscape of the poem, as in the painting, is arid and hostile. It contains a "drained sea"; its 'trees' are "lonely and conjugal". The seeming contradictions are fitting in poetry whose premise is to present such contradictions; 'conjugality', or any union of male and female, did not necessarily represent personal and artistic 'freedoms' for

²⁴⁶ *Surrealism*, Patrick Walberg, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1997), 97.

women artists. The hope is that the last woman in the world, naked and vulnerable amongst the “sharp / coral branches”, finds another state of being by way of “the seaweed / cathedral of shock flowers”. I envisage this not as a specifically religious space but more as a bizarre studio where but the “shock flowers” denote radical artistic practice, denied to a woman as passive model and muse. ‘Grey’, as a colour, derives from the combining of ‘black’ and ‘white’. It is an ‘in-between’ colour. If the words ‘black’ and ‘white’ appeared in a holopoem, the medium would not allow for ‘grey’ to be result of their coalescence. There would be instead a combination of the two words that would be (according to Eduardo Kac) outside semantics. I make this point about ‘The Grey Forest’ because the third section of the poem projects ahead to a new landscape, “Summer for the forest is the future / the season where masses of shadows will change / themselves into words and gifted beings”, whereby the estranged woman finds her way back to language and to ‘own’ it with confidence, “has the nerve / to search at zero’o clock”. The first Meridian laser was an art installation named *0 Degrees*.²⁴⁷ The reference to “zero o’ clock” is therefore a buried reference to the potentiating force of the laser / hologram for women’s reading and writing practices in the scheme of my project. The poem’s final question, “on waking” recalls the emphasis placed by surrealists on what might be ‘dredged’ (my word) from dreams to bring to art and writing. The repetition of “on waking” and the question “What is a forest?” is meant to show that the woman’s “awakening” to a new reality that she is able to freely construct and inhabit. My use of the ‘dredging’ metaphor looks ahead to my poems set in Greenwich, specifically those featuring the figureheads whose discovery was often as a result of acts of dredging. It is one of several poems which prepare the reader for the emergence of Clair Obscur. The

²⁴⁷ <http://www.thegreenwichmeridian.org/tgm/articles.php?article=14> last accessed 25th September 2016.

representations of women in these poems are versions of entrapped Clair; Clair as ‘everywoman’; Clair as myself.

In Giorgio de Chirico’s painting *Melancholy and Mystery of a Street* (1914), a young girl, who looks like a shadow, bowls a hoop down a stretch of sunlit road between tall buildings that are skewed at angles on either side. My poem has the same title as the painting.; its premise derives directly from what De Chirico has depicted. The painting is menacing. It foreshadows the onset of the First World War. My poem, and the two that succeed it in my collection, denotes the vulnerability of women who ‘dare’ to appear in urban spaces. The poem is in two section. In the first section I enact a direct ekphrastic dialogue with the setting of the painting. The gaze of the flâneur is a reductive gaze; as a result, women have shadow-selves which bely their actual selves. This is the condition of the girl (another entrapped Clair) in the first part of the poem, “She’s a shadow herself ...”, and the poem proceeds via a series of warnings about the dangers of the space she is in, “Beware tall encroaching citizens / ... the colonnade of sunlight ... tense isometric shapes ... / like the wagon with deceptive inner space”. Perceptions cannot be trusted, and so, therefore, perspectives neither. The hinge of the poem is the question that hints at some kind of rupture, “Doesn’t she know her world / is about to crack along invisible seams, will drift / apart?” This foreshadows the disruption that will occur to a known ‘world’ as a result of Clair’s impending journey through the hologram. This will be a ‘flâneuserie’ where ‘drift’ and indirection result in a movement from Clair being trapped in a flat two-dimensional world of surfaces towards a “dimensionality” in which she can be fully immersed. I have deliberately employed a fluid form where the positionings of white space between groups of lines give the poem an airy, sculpted shape which runs counter to the theme of entrapment and deliberately signals potential release from it.

The second section of the poem sees a shift in tone and form. It is more prose-like and moves from the reporting on the third-person 'she', from a distanced standpoint of the first section to the second-person plural which draws in the reader, "We knew. We saw how the buildings behaved, defying the horizon... We cannot blame the artist". There is a suggestion of complicity in the design of the painting, and of the entrapment of the girl, by unidentified persons. I intended this 'We' to carry a heavy irony; it assumes a ventriloquism of male artists and 'guardians' of culture who make 'rules' that fix or entrap women. De Chirico is allowed to break the rules of perspective in order to attain his vision, " 'this non-sense ... is, in fact / life ...' ", a freedom not available to Clair or other women. The irony is at its most marked in the final solemn pronouncement, "We, the metaphysicians, would approve", but before it 'life' spills out of the broken egg, preparing a reader for the poem where Clair is birthed from a marble egg and its shadow in 'The Beginning of the World' (E, 45).

'Slubbed' teases out an incipient flâneuserie from the same painting. This is a block of prose. It has a 'stop / start' rhythm where the first long, fluid unpunctuated lines are interrupted by the poet seeking to define the poem (and the project) and its possible routes. The voice I intended is of 'unshowy' soliloquy whose lines, at first, mimic the unravelling of a bale of the material of its title: 'slubbed' silk is silk which has imperfections. I mentioned that it teases out a 'flâneuserie': in my mind, when I drafted the poem, were bolts of sari material on Leicester market, a material associated with female identity within a culture. I had in mind act of recklessness, accident even, or choice beyond boundaries, those "encompassing boulevards": the choice between 'threshold' or 'enclosure'. The poem first five lines of the poem mimic the roving of the flâneur and are collaged from Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* to enhance such mimicry. The conceit of the mind as being "rucked and fissured like a bolt of silk flung across carriageways" reinforces any ideas that the

initial suggestion of choice in routes taken could have been misguided. The signs of damage and rupture in the rucks and fissures; the accident, may appear devastating in the first instance but these will be in ‘thresholds’ to for the poet / artist / researcher to find her way. In my project, such “passageways” have involved deliberations about the form and positioning of the individual poems; working out their connections with my poetics in the Zones. The conglomeration of “cells (or nodes) ... plotted co-ordinates” recalls Kac’s description of establishing viewing zones in a computer holopoem. In my poem the construct of the flâneur becomes enervated and impotent, caught in the labyrinth of urban spaces for which he is unfitted. The poem enacts a series of cul-de-sacs; another intertext, “the ball of string that you untie etc.” is to my poem ‘Show Date and Time’²⁴⁸ from my earlier collection, *The Japan Quiz*, and in which, via another sort of unravelling, the poet attempts to locate herself. The poem also seeks the kind of creative flâneuserie which can transcend the claustrophobic, limiting world of paid employment, “this convoluted world of weather”. This may be the opposite of an idle flânerie, but may too often be in service of a world of appearances. ‘Slubbed’ bids “to keep all gendered bodies visible and industrious”; it is women who are more overtly negatively ‘gendered’ than men in discourses concerning them. There is also a wider sense in which the ‘cul-de-sacs’ are features of my experience of the convolutions of practice-based research; not only in the vertiginous positioning the self, but constant navigation of the sources that constitute finding a way through its “labyrinth”.

²⁴⁸ Thompson, *Japan Quiz*, 51.

3.2 iii Silent City (E, 22)

The sequence, 'Silent City' moves my ekphrastic dialogues from the two-dimensional spatial medium of painting to the time-based medium of film. The six poems signify a re-framing of a filmed 'version' of my home city, Leicester (some of its 'zones') and form various responses to a fifteen minute film, *Silent City*,²⁴⁹ produced by Leicester film-maker, Keith Allott. This film, from January 2012, documents events in the city over a period from 10pm at night to 7.30am the next morning. It is the type of ekphrasis where I was literally 'side-by-side' with the film-maker as he selected his scenes, and techniques. The poem is an early example of flâneuserie. As poet / artist, I have re-made them, drawing attention to artifice and transformation via the various lenses, camera positions and special effects. As the first poem, 'Closing' (E, 22) details: "You can compose the music of mood / from the credits backward ... // ... On kerbs dripping with visual sweat / And touting glamorous grime ..." I was consciously 'working towards' the hologram, being as yet, "without visual prompt of green ...". In Poem 2. 'Touchscreen Alley' (E, 23) I, "play the game of where the filmmaker stood / to make this gully of shadows / this canny film-set ..." The title of Poem 3. 'Full' (E, 24) refers to a sign in a car-park. My poem describes the way the sign was shot in the film, "The sign in lights / that's propped in air / is a lie on glass ..." Its seeming insubstantiality in the film is both illusory and 'real' as filming an object translates it into another 'form'. This is a reaching towards the properties of the hologram whereby a solid object becomes transformed between a light and lenses. Poem 4. 'Headlights Home' (E, 25) appropriates the voice or voices of people out late in the city trying to get home. The effects of alcohol, the rain, the headlights; the bouncing reflections of lights off wet

²⁴⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/user/badshoes7> last accessed 25th September 2016.

surfaces are disorienting. This disorientation is supported in a metaphor of hunting and being hunted in the second section, “We track down headlights ... / ... crouch down behind winter twigs ...” In the final four lines the language is more heightened: “We crack open the night head / alone where twin lights barge rain ...” The logical syntactical pattern has been disrupted deliberately to communicate the nature of the filmic translation of experience. The main focus of Poem 5. ‘Street level’ (E, 26) is on a young woman in a blue and white dress queuing for fast-food. Once again I have used filmic effects and I have chosen to develop the conceit of these shops or restaurants as “fast-food aquaria” that “float burgers, / lasagna, on glass. // Shoaling inside / hungry clubbers.” The woman, and other people in the shop, are filmed through double ‘lenses’: the windows of the shop and the lens of the camera. My poem draws attention to such ‘transformations’, and to how the film-making process will further modify what has been “seen” in the initial viewing, “flood flash flame / balled lightning // film trick ...” Poem 6. ‘cone’ (E, 27) is a brief adjunct to the previous poems. It is a response to a close up shot of a capsized traffic-cone. A cone marks off zones which cannot be entered. The capsizing of the cone represents encroachment into forbidden zones. The young men in the poem who “stride ahead of their shadows” are in contrast to the shadow-figure of the girl in ‘Melancholy and Mystery of a Street’ in being confidently visible in this urban space. No zone is forbidden.

In Roy Fisher begins his sequence ‘Texts for a Film’ with the line, “Birmingham’s what I think with”²⁵⁰; the poems in ‘Silent City’ represent an equivalent of ‘thinking’ with one’s city via another artist’s ‘vision’, with me appropriating filmic techniques to do so. Fisher’s poem ‘Of the Empirical Self and for Me,’ raises the issue of the place of pronominals in a poem. It states “In my poems /

²⁵⁰ *The Long and the Short of It: Poems 1955-2005*, (Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 2005), 285.

there's seldom any I or you – ...” Its stance is derived from objectivism; a stance which was prized by male modernists for its impersonality. Throughout this project I reckon with issues of ‘selves’ and have not reached a position as definite as that one stated in Fisher’s poem. My ‘selves’ are ‘fluid’ and are altered according to the experiences that affect them. These further lines from Fisher’s poem, suggest the kind of insights I sought in writing the poems in ‘Silent City’, and which I carried forward into other work:

... the village goes dark with blown fuses,
and lightning-strokes repeatedly
bang out their own reality-prints
of the same houses
staring an instant out of the dark.²⁵¹

I interpret the “lightning-strokes” to be analogous to the effect of the ‘laser’ as a metaphor for sources of creative illumination. As a result poems can be repeated “reality-prints” if their ultimate ‘reality’ is understood to take various forms, and to arise from different triggers. They resemble each other, “the same houses”, only in as much that they are ‘poems’ and that that they have arisen from conditions of uncertainty, “out of the dark”. Yet poems are ‘reality-prints’ not subjects or objects themselves; as ‘prints’, they are reproducible but the readings of them will differ from ‘viewer’ to ‘viewer’. The hologram which inhabits an ‘in-between’ space between laser and film. It looks like a ‘real’ object but is spectral; its appearance, or not, depends on the viewing perspective. The Preface to *Equinoctial* suggests that a reader should be open to readings of ‘in-between’ spaces between poems, and groups of poems.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 239.

Roy Fisher's sequence 'City'²⁵² comprises poems which adopt different stylistic approaches to the poet's city of birth. They suggest sensory apprehensions that have been received by recording 'eye' of the flâneur, and have the appearances of 'assemblages' on the page. Fisher says of his poem that it is:

... meant to be about a city which has already turned
into a city of the mind. Where the writing is topographical
it's meant to do with the EFFECTS of topography, the
creation of scenic moments, psychological environments,
and it's not meant to be a historical / spatial city entailed
to empirical reality.²⁵³

When I write about 'the city', just as when I write about 'the museum', I have looked to creating, not 'representations' (of 'the real'), but 'transformations'. Fisher's comments are helpful in supporting my intentions, as is the following: "You use your attention to get, to construct something, which will enable you to see."²⁵⁴ For me, this is the poet / artist's recognition of how attentions from one art-form will spill over to illuminate another, and can be deliberately 'harnessed' towards such a service.

3.2 iv Holiday Interiors (E, 28)

During a conversation with me at the Aldeburgh Poetry Festival, in 2005, Roy Fisher mentioned that he had wanted the poems in the sequence, 'Interiors with Various Figures'²⁵⁵, to be approached "like installations you could walk around." It was with this idea in mind that I enacted ekphrastic dialogues with the poems (treating them as 'installations') in my own sequence, 'Holiday Interiors'. The literal premise is a holiday in a Spanish village but I wanted a topographical 'no-place'

²⁵² Ibid., 27-44.

²⁵³ Interview with Jed Rasula, in *Interviews Through Time and Selected Prose*, (Exeter: Shearsman, 2000), 56.

²⁵⁴ Fisher, *Long and the Short of It*, 171.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 261-267.

where realities and relationships are skewed and ungrounded, as in Fisher's poems. A relationship between two people is suggested at the core of the sequence.

'The Arrival' (E, 29) was originally the first poem in the sequence. However, in retrospect, I decided that 'The Swimmers' (E, 28) should begin the sequence as I could 'read back' into its imagery processes of this research; also, I noted its sly subversion of gender politics (man as figurehead, ornamental; woman as voyeur, artist / curator), and set up a space for consideration of these ideas for the rest of the collection. I literally 'dive back' into the work to 'dredge up' new ideas from it. In the poem, a male figure is "poised for a dive like a figurehead", and is "frozen" in time and mid-action. The woman ("I") has the mobility of thought that looks ahead to consequences. There is no water; she prepares for the eventuality of the man's "battered skull", "She was accustomed." There is a tradition of the self-effacement of the partner of the male artist in the service of boosting his fragile ("battered") ego in allowing him to practice his art. The poem subverts this gendered effacement. There are two 'selves' in the poem: the speaker watches her other 'self' becoming the 'self' who has retrospective control of the previous events. Their images are "digitally enhanced". The woman can alter a previous 'reality': "... I later lay each image out carefully / displacing sofa, two chairs ...". The final couplet of the poem signifies the ultimate unleashing of female creative energies which subsume those of the male, and the man himself: "Manic splashing from under the rug / so I lift it to let the pool in at last."

In Poem 2. 'The Arrival' (E, 29) the speaker is female and the gender of the addressee is left deliberately ambivalent: "You have the look of a someone newly-awoken under water ...". The woman could equally be addressing herself as she might be a partner. I wanted the reader both readings at once. The poem presents a sense of restlessness (even while on holiday); of the placing and looking for clues,

“you might have ... hidden in one nondescript grey breezeblock / spent matches, the philosopher’s stone.” There is the possibility that once again there must be the investigation or interrogation of ‘grey’, a colour which denotes an ‘in-between’ space in the project. It arises here as a “breezeblock”, the type of brick at the inner layer of a building. The “spent matches” yield no light. “The philosopher’s stone” may hold another clue to the “locked kingdom” of the poetry and the final form of this project. Whether it is the woman or man who should “have been / more ceremonious with expiring winged creature”, the re-positioning of the poem in the sequence after ‘The Swimmers’ reinforces the connective image of “winged creatures” (poems?) that either fly or expire. I link this with Barbara Guest’s statement that when a poet “align(s) the content of the poem with the vision which directs it ... we say of the poem that it has ‘wings’ ” (FoI, 28). Guest doesn’t make this statement specifically in relation to poetry by women but it connects usefully with a discussion about figureheads, vision and flight in this project.

Poem 3. ‘The Twin Room’ (E, 30) foreshadows ‘Astray’ (E, 102-109) which is in ekphrastic dialogue with the topographical landscape of Kac’s holopoem, ‘Astray on Deimos’. This poem refers to language, “Fuckoff / fuckingdickhead” on the (green) painted walls of a bedroom “cave”. I had in mind a layering of time-periods in juxtaposing scrawled words on a bedroom wall with images of primitive art such as that found in the Caves at Lascaux. There is irony in my description of “A guide pointing out daubs. Translation. / Lion / Pig / Bigot”, as all art, in the end. Rests on how an individual viewer ‘translates’ it. ‘The Cave’ like ‘The Museum’ can be a literal space or a metonymy for space which expands what it can encompass, “billowing around you”. I had in mind the various immersive 3D Visualisation

projects in ‘The Cave’ at Brown University²⁵⁶. This time the idea of silk being unraveled and unfolded recalls time recalls the “parachutes” (life-saving devices) which, in Barbara Guest’s poem ‘Parachutes, My Love, Could Carry Us Higher’ (CP, 14), allow for transcendence but keep lovers suspended “between air and water”, a “stranger ocean”. There may be way for a woman to ‘enter’ unfamiliar immersive worlds like those presented by the holopoems with an artist / guide. In the poem, the ‘guide’ prepares the spaces for Clair to take over; for now the mother tries to ‘translate’ the signs of mental pain of a teenage son, and, at the same time, co-exist in a creative space (cave) for unhindered creative expression.

In Poem 4. ‘Single Room’ (E, 31) phrases from an article on water scarcity are collaged to give a sense of faux-authority; also, an exploration of various spaces in time, “Mesopotamia ... the dynasty of Xia and Shang.” The “you” is both poet / narrator and “other” in a relationship. The bathroom is a potential “shrine” to water: a life / creativity symbol, subject to “control” by “water despots”; and yet, as a force of nature, is in its various forms, frequently “uncontrollable”. The line “Snowmelt or monsoon?” connects back to the unleashing of the “pool” in ‘The Swimmers’, where contained water won’t be contained. Here, as elsewhere, water and other reflective surfaces become a series of lenses which serve as pre-holographic devices to scrutinize the ‘spaces’ that I and a reader will move through. Art and writing poems are acts of leaving one’s ‘mark’; the writer intends a readership whether the marks have been left via known acts of artistic accomplishment or via psychological trauma.

Poem 5. ‘The Frog-Light’ (E, 42), refers to a small light (see below); a device that provides creative inspiration, or would, if it contained batteries. I wanted to

²⁵⁶ <https://www.ccv.brown.edu/viz-cave>

communicate a sense, familiar to poets, of never feeling satisfied with creative work; that it is inadequate in some way, “a lost world ... Whenever she waits, a frog never happens.” And yet, creativity happens when the woman does not recognize it: in the devising of the eventual scheme of the collection; the artificial frog, on its “green plastic lily-pad”, and its “water drops” (lenses) which are fake but “authentic” at the same time is precursor to the hologram (also green) and its potentially transformative space. The domestic interior (study) which is the frog-light’s home can stifle creativity, but a frog is a symbol of life.

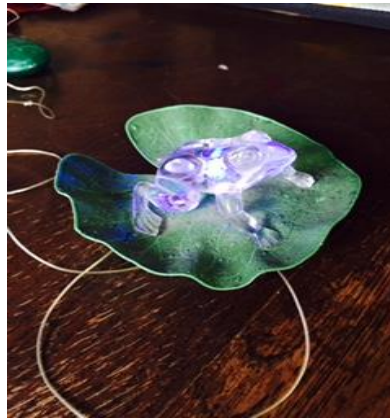


Figure 12. *The Frog Light*²⁵⁷

As in ‘The Swimmers’, this poem connects with being immersed in research and the quest to negotiate the ‘new’ environment and not be submerged. It links with finding necessary self-belief to continue as a female poet via whatever ‘selves’ (styles, personae) might be chosen. The woman in the poem, on the cusp of such an arrival, for now, “waits as the mirror fakes it for her.” Rachel Blau DuPlessis (drawing on Luce Irigaray) states that the “... hybrid, critical and political subject desires amphibious modes of writing that no longer formulate in authoritarian ... fashion; such writing would display an ‘elliptical, searching, riddling inventiveness.”²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Photograph by Pam Thompson

²⁵⁸ Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian Gill (New York: Cornell University Press, [1974] 1985), 133-46 in DuPlessis, 2006, 8.

“Amphibious” expression can be unpredictable and humorous, as, I argue it is, in the toad chorus in Denise Riley’s ‘The Castalian Spring’, which deflates the poet-toad’s musing melancholia, “ ‘Don’t *you* stifle *us* with your egotist’s narrative ... / We’ll plait our own wildly elaborate patterns.’ ”²⁵⁹

In Poem 6. ‘The Kiosk’ (E, 33) I had in mind the interior of a kiosk that might be found in a Spanish holiday resort, cluttered with newspapers, magazines and tourist souvenirs. The ‘returns’ are ‘items’ that occur elsewhere in my poems in ‘Right Eye / The Ekphrastic Museum’ with its surrealist art:

...I noted, returned, a bride stripped
bare by her batchelors, a nude woman with horse,
arcades, porticoes, enigmas, with one,
or maybe two breasts included, the kiss
of the dream women, a forest of symbols
(no heads, female) ...

The items include the stuff of male artist muse-making, and the city architectures that enclose the ‘muses’. The return of the objects empowers the woman behind the counter, who is then ‘seen’ properly to continue her artistry alone, for herself, by herself. I wanted to convey a sense of a story being told: myth-making and un-making. As a poet / tourist, I am at once outside the scene relating the ‘tale’ and inside the kiosk, witnessing the events. It is a poem that prepares the reader for the emergence of Clair and the story of the hologram in the poem, ‘The Telling’ (E, 74). Poem 8. ‘The Information Bureau’ (E, 34) is a collage; a mini-poetics. I again had in mind Ken Edwards’s example; the result, lively, playful and wise: “See clearly with clear eyes ... Laugh uncontrollably. Waste time ... ”²⁶⁰ My poem includes comments

²⁵⁹ Riley, *Selected Poems*, 91.

²⁶⁰ Edwards, *Good Science*, 1.

selected from a book about how different artists overcome creative blocks,²⁶¹ “The important thing is to keep moving. / Whatever it is, tear it up, break it apart. // Create little interventions ... ” These lines draw attention to some of the methods I use this project: the general experimentation and ‘flaneuserie’. The line, “Watch for a bigger moon, / one that’s shaky and double”, advises attentiveness to the new ways of ‘seeing’. The inclusion of a reference to the moon in a poem runs the risk of falling into cliché; one that is “bigger ... shaky and double” has been seen anew as a result of such attentiveness. I draw attention to the idea of seeing ‘slant’ to gain new perspectives by the deliberate upturning of the word “angles”. It is also written in a different font; by placing it in the area of white space between the two sections of the poem I intended it to look like a kinetic sign. The poem concludes, “See what pushes. With / these things inhabit a new space. Spaces.” and is a recommendation to reach beyond what is known in poetry and reaches towards the ‘new space’ of the hologram as a means of doing so.

In Poem 8. ‘The Museum’ (E, 35) I have replaced swimming / diving metaphors for archaeological / geological ones and, in retrospect, recognize how they draw attention to my creative process, particularly the opening lines: ‘Excavating meaning from base-metals, / truth from violet crystals ... // Fools’ Gold under dark glass ... ’ The premise is wandering through a museum, looking into cabinets and seeing various metals and crystals and minerals. I have drawn on my experience of doing this in Leicester Museum. At the time, I wondered how to bring the objects into a poem or poems. There was something strangely glamorous and enticing about them, particularly the appearance of the crystals under ultra-violet light and the Fools’ Gold glimmering under dark glass; there are parallels with my fascination with holograms

²⁶¹ Danielle Krysa, *Creative Block: Advice and Projects from 50 Successful Artists* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2014).

holograms and I ‘excavated’ meaning from these objects too, as the poem witnesses. The pronouncement of a male modernist is an interruption to the female speaker’s nascent creativity, “His announcement ... // ... I catch the hem of his words ... “ and half a feeling that she should be in awe of what he says. References to Japanese culture which link back to those in the sequence, ‘Parting the Ghosts of Salt’, in *The Japan Quiz*.²⁶² This sequence comprises a series of letters between a mother and daughter, both of whom are married to Sumo wrestlers. In that sequence, the close bond between mother and daughter transcends any ritualistic role ascribed to them in their culture. ‘The Museum’ presents museum as theatre where such rituals are played out: “Kabuki statement”, “ideogrammic pact”, “the trespassing public imprinting lip shapes on Japanese paper”. At the back of this too is Ezra Pound’s comment that he had forged an “ideogrammic” poetics in *The Cantos* from his readings on the Chinese language.²⁶³ While acknowledging that I have situated my poems within a modernist lineage, the female speaker / artist manages to evade ways of working that the male poet wants to prescribe for, hence this exclamation and the words that follow it: “In the name of the father! A joke. / Do not. In the museum.” The “animals” in the final line, who “appear in righteous furs denoting song” have something of the anarchic spirit of the chorus in ‘The Castalian Spring’; to plot their own “wildly elaborate patterns” as living, breathing poetry that only women can write.

Poem 9. ‘The Football Table’ (E, 36) is a deliberately playful version of Fisher’s poem of the same name. In my poem, something vast and momentous ‘an actual universe beginning’ is being ‘made’ with tools which seem inadequate for the task, “a ping pong ball” or too clumsy “fused legs and feet booting air”. The bricoleur

²⁶² 9-28.

²⁶³ There is a discussion of this in Laszlo K. Géfin, *Ideogram: Modern American Poetry* (Milton Keynes: The Open University Press, 1982), 27-46.

/-euse uses whatever tools at hand for the project at hand. In Zone One I mentioned that bricolage was part of my working method. Just as a ping-pong ball must be accepted as a substitute for the sun if the ‘game’ is to continue in this football-table universe a poet, or researcher, may not be able to continue with the poem or research if she is forever seeking for the perfect words or forms; what comes instinctively and immediately must be seized upon and used to prevent creative block. To “repack the duvet into / the goalmouth, like a parachute” is a movement from creative incubation to expansion and a form of safety in decisions made about the project at hand. One would not normally sleep on a football table but the lateral-thinking act has brought about a new ‘vision’. I have already mentioned how the “parachute” operates as a metaphor for safety, protection and creative expansion in my work. Women’s writing will always be under more scrutiny than that of men. In public spaces it is more readily open to attack: “Far cries from another galaxy, too hot, too hot.”

The final poem ‘The Departure’ (E, 37) has overt links with the more personal poems in the ‘Convergence’ section of *Equinoctial*. It expresses thoughts about peri-menopause which, along with menopause, as natural stages of a woman’s life, are not often written about by female poets. I suspect there maybe shame or taboo attached to the subject. Society has pressurized women to present themselves as eternally youthful. Representations in art have traditionally propagated this myth also. In this poem I am conflate the situation of a holiday’s end with speculation about whether or not a period would arrive, “I have come this far and I didn’t think you’d be leaving ...” There are hints of the end of a relationship, or transitions within one. It is not untypical for women to re-evaluate their lives at the time of menopause. In the poem, the woman notes emotions of loss, regret: compares herself with others that still have fertility, and thus ‘agency’ and ‘visibility’, according to societal ‘norms’, “the fruitful ones ... wave confident blood scarves.” And yet, the final couplet as

closing lines of the sequence suggests some arbitrary, non-prescriptive means of transcendence:

Avoid dreaded tunnels. Climb. Anywhere.
Eat a succulent thing. Wear music.

‘Holiday Interiors’ have, as a model, poems by a poet who sought to keep a ‘self’ out of his work. In contrast, these poems feature the ‘selves’ of a woman at a time of personal transition although there is ironic distancing. Fisher envisaged his poems as being in 3D; installations that could be walked around. I take this idea into my own ekphrastic dialogues with his sequence. These dialogues subvert the convention of ‘the interior’ where a woman or women are merely stilled and passive subjects of the ‘gaze’ of the male artist.

3.2 v Postcards from Belfast (E, 39)

‘Postcards from Belfast’ (E, 39) derives from a visit to that city in April, 2009. It was not my first visit as the city was the birthplace of my late father. I decided to construe photographs I took on that visit as ‘postcards’ thus being double visual ‘constructs’ of places in and around the city. A postcard is a reproduction of view of a person, place or object and is traditionally bought and sent from places other than a person’s home town or city. Postcards are associated with holidays and disruptions to the usual daily routine. The message written on the back of a postcard is limited by the small space; just enough to describe the accommodation, the food, the weather. What is left ‘unsaid’ maybe as revealing as what is actually written. The images on the front of the card can be likewise deceptive. Artist Tom Phillips writes in the essay, ‘The Postcard Vision’:

The postcard does not constitute proof that anything
happened or that anyone was there or that anything was

any colour or that there were or were not clouds in the sky ...²⁶⁴

He draws attention the technological interventions of the printing process that distort the actual colours of the scene:

Postcard reality has a higher incidence of red cars
and a higher incidence of people dressed in bright red
or bright blue than in 'real life.'²⁶⁵

Phillips's essay is humorous and ironic in tone to express the serious point that what we see has been 'constructed' and the visual deception is has become assimilated into the cultural reception of postcards. Phillips absorbed the 'iconography and typology'²⁶⁶ of postcards into his painting; they were a generative device. My poem is written in the form of a sestina with each stanza having the title of a place in or around Belfast. The poem originated on my blog, 'Heckle' with each stanza being accompanied by a photograph I took of the city during my visit. The idea was that the image should be viewed as the front of the postcard with each stanza of the poem representing the writing on the back it.

Postcards of art-works in museums 'reproduce' these works to give them wider circulation; postcard-like images are also available in the digital versions of 'the museum' online. A series of postcards of sculpture of *The Three Graces* by Antonio Canova bought by art historian Griselda Pollock in the museum shop of the National Gallery of Scotland prompts her comment about her encounter with the sculpture, "the vision of the work", in postcards of it.²⁶⁷ The postcards, she notes, are of "attractively photographed images of bits of sculpted female bodies"²⁶⁸. Their

²⁶⁴ *Works. Texts. To 1974*. (Stuttgart: hansjörg mayer, 1983), 231-2.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 88.

²⁶⁷ *Virtual Feminist Museum*, 9.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

reproduction ensured further proliferation of naked women in art, “the classically invented female nude is synonymous with and has become *the* sign of art in Western culture.”²⁶⁹ Pollock, like Phillips, draws attention to the deceptiveness of a mediated ‘vision’ and how technologies collude with this. The postcards in the Edinburgh gallery were further reinforcing the engrained gendered tradition of ‘The Nude’ in art, this time reproducing, in postcards, “a full-frontal view of the whole and selected parts and angles ...”²⁷⁰ All this may seem a long way from my poem but Phillips’s and Pollock’s responses to ‘the postcard’ contributed to my decision to present each stanza of my poems as if it were a postcard; the poem is ekphrastic in that each stanza is in dialogue with one of my photographs of Belfast. There is a further notional ekphrasis with the conventions of the postcard and their altered versions of perceived reality; a deceptiveness of “vision” that links with the viewing of a hologram. The poem arises from acts of *flâneuserie*: the literal wandering of a city, and in my interactions with Pollock’s feminist re-envisionings of ‘the archive’. Another act of *flâneuserie* in the construction of my poem relates to my decision to cast it as a *sestina*; a fixed form and traditionally a troubadour one invented by Arnaut Daniel in the twelfth century²⁷¹. Like the sonnet, the *sestina* has associations with a male ‘lover’ who espouses the forms song-like circularity for the pursuit of a woman. This was an early poem for my research and I found the form’s circularity in its repeated end words useful as I began to reckon with ideas for my project. I have therefore designated it as a ‘thinking-form’ and reclaimed here by me for feminist purposes.

I have both presented an illusion of compositional ‘wholeness’ in adopting the *sestina* form, but have also disrupted the illusion by giving each section a heading. In

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 21.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 40.

²⁷¹ Mark Strand and Eavan Boland, eds., *The Making of a Poem* (New York / London: Norton, 2001), 22

doing this I am asking the reader to consider the whole and its several parts at once. Each stanza or ‘postcard’ is part of the ‘composite Belfast’: I have manipulated its representation. Particularly poignant in this poem is the political dimension and how this is manifest in a range of ‘stories’: of a Catholic black cab driver; in a museum, “Replica of a cell in Armagh women’s prison ... / drawings of (their) kids”; ‘stories’ as ‘told’ via political murals in the city. I chose end-words of the sestina – ‘street’, ‘lists’, ‘picture’, ‘blue’, ‘windows’, ‘ice’ – which connected with themes in my project: ‘street’ connotes urban wandering; ‘lists’ signifies acts of repeating and ordering, relevant to processes of writing poems and making decisions about the structure of the thesis; ‘picture’ connects with my ekphrastic investigations and notions of what is or isn’t outside the ‘frame’; ‘windows’ and ‘ice’ are types of ‘lens’ and link with ideas about vision and reflection; ‘blue’ is associated with ice, and also water, looking ahead to Greenwich and the figureheads. Each stanza acts as a ‘holding structure’ allowing for different emphases on the end-words each time they arise in its pattern. The suggestive associations of each word reverberate throughout the poem and outwards into the project. This recalls the phenomenon whereby a fragment of the hologram (individual end-word) contains the whole image (whole poem).

3.2 vi Stage-set (E, 40) and The Notebook of Improper Desires (E, 41)

Belfast also represents the city as ‘stage’ where, in my poem, my ongoing personal ‘dramas’ relating to my identity as woman, academic and poet are played out against a backdrop of ongoing political ones. ‘Stage-set’ (E, 40) is a mini-psychodrama in which I encounter (in a dream or fevered early-morning waking state) a precarious self and / or other, ‘she walked toward me on a high wire’. It has connections with ‘Hope at 4am’ and represents a further movement away from the flat surface to a third dimension. Despite the precariousness of that activity, it is a ‘safety-

net street' that can encompass contending forms or states of being, 'cartoon and solid / shadow.' The high-wire act represents the balancing-acts a woman poet in how to 'perform' in public spaces; a balance between what she wants to write and what is prescribed for her by masculine literary 'authorities'. The space she / I walk / s across is the range of her / my ambition and its further potential. The woman on the high-wire is equally Clair moving towards her own emergence.

'The Notebook of Improper Desires' (E, 41) has a sub-title, 'Trying on the aphrodisiac jacket'. Salvador Dali's artwork *Aphrodisiac Jacket* (1936) is an actual jacket each of whose multiple pockets hold a plastic beaker of supposed absinthe:

Dali hands you the aphrodisiac jacket
with its wide
shrug out hands pockets
and multiple beakers of
green

pockets like windows ...

My 'flâneuserie' in this poem derives from a walk in Castle Park in Leicester, observing a derelict knitwear factory, and a memory of seeing this jacket in a museum; in retrospect, it is almost as if my subconscious was reaching for the hologram as can be noted in the references to "green", trying to find the 'spaces' where the poem / s will begin, "green envelopes licked at the edges / sealed in // having drunk the letters dry ..." As I was 'strolling along' in my notebook in 2013 when this poem was written I begun to reckon with the Greenwich holograms and laser. The colour green was gaining significance for my work. In the nineteenth-century, absinthe was referred to as 'The Green Fairy', ²⁷²a term which pointed to it as a source of artistic inspiration but also to its aphrodisiac and addictive properties. It suits my purposes to exaggerate the link between absinthe addiction and my tenacity in investigating 'the holographic' for my thesis: I have been inspired by 'the

²⁷² <http://www.absinthefever.com/green-fairy> last accessed 25th September 2016.

hologram’; fallen in love with the new ideas it has generated, and have become ‘addicted’ to exploring with its possibilities for writing new poetry and constructing a poetics. Surrealism has handed me ‘props’ (like this jacket) to try on, with its various accoutrements. My ekphrastic dialogue with Dali’s work; with absinthe as ‘The Green Fairy’, brings to light Clair Obscur in an earlier incarnation and enacts a physical and mental flâneuserie.

3.2 vii Mier Bitte (E, 43) and Assemblage (E, 44)

‘Mier Bitte’ (E,43) named after a 1947 work by Kurt Schwitters, appropriates a version of his working method ‘Merz;’²⁷³ to “smash, rip, / reassemble” ‘found’ materials; a process akin to ‘Assemblage’. The poem continues my practice of finding different ways to ‘see’ anew; here, as poet I rearrange a landscape (rather than city streets) and, in doing so, imitate Schwitters’ method of making an ‘assemblage’ but in language. Assemblage is a vigorous method that brings together different materials; it signifies a departure from collage, moving from the flat surface of the page into a third dimension. As poet / artist I also ‘make strange’ a notion of the pastoral that presents a rural landscape as unpeopled and idyllic. With ‘Merz’, Schwitters pursued his own form of Dada. It allows for a transgression of the illusion of containment created by ‘the frame’ in art. In this poem and ‘Assemblage’ (E, 44) the poem which succeeds it in the collection, my ekphrastic interventions again radiate from poem to the ‘making’ of the whole project; as being ‘assembled’ from disparate ‘found’ materials.

My poem ‘Assemblage’ (E, 44) is a prose-poem. The title derives from Joseph Cornell’s installation, *Suzy’s Sun* (1957). I chose the prose-poem form so the block of

²⁷³ See more detail at the beginning of Zone Two.

text would ‘mimic’ the shape of the box in which Cornell rearranged his ‘found’ objects, like those in this work: a sun, a wooden ball, a shell, a pennant. This type of ‘interior’ formed a kind of ‘stage-set’ in which Cornell could make his psychological preoccupations visual and as sculptures.²⁷⁴ *Suzy’s Sun* is an example of one of Cornell’s ‘Sailor’s Boxes’, in which he places mundane objects connected with the sea, and, in juxtaposing them, renders them ‘strange’. My poem comprises a series of directions on how to ‘navigate’ an elemental scene when a boat at sea under a hot sun is in some kind of in danger: “... plant two yellow pennants, launch a flare that dies in painted cirrus ...” I have mentioned that Cornell’s works remind me of stage-sets. In the early days of the project, I spoke with Martin Richardson about the possibility of making a holographic ‘poem’. The practicalities of this were, for the time being, unfeasible, but Martin’s suggestion that I should use shoe-boxes in which to design 3D scenes has continued to resonate. I hope to use this method towards making a 3D poem (or poems) in the future. The ekphrastic dialogue with Cornell’s installation provides another hinge towards what holopoetry, the Greenwich holograms and the laser, come to represent in my research; the imperatives in *Suzy’s Sun* are precedents for Clair Obscur’s advice for me as poet / artist. This extract from Charles Simic’s prose poem, ‘Birds of a Feather,’ in a collection of poems written in response to the art of Joseph Cornell, aligns with my discussions elsewhere about the deceptiveness of ‘vision’ and of place as ‘stage-set’:

The eyes cannot be philosophically trusted, but in
the meantime they can be entertained. Nature, too, makes
fakes—fake masterpieces of art ... The evening sky and
the big city in the distance are constantly changing their theatrical
scenery. We don’t really believe any of this, but it sure looks
that way sometimes.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ I am indebted to insights gained from the *Joseph Cornell: Wanderlust* exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, 4th July – 27th September, 2015 and from the catalogue of that exhibition.

²⁷⁵ *Dime Story Alchemy: The Art of Joseph Cornell* (New York: New York Review Book, 1992), 38.

Cornell was preoccupied with actresses and ballerinas; a ‘muse-maker’ who ‘fixed’ them inside his as other male surrealists did with the female figures in their paintings.

3.2 viii ‘The Beginning of the World’ (E, 45) and ‘Soft Tissue’(E, 46)

I have discussed poems which foreshadow the emergence of Clair Obscur and have illustrated the need for her emergence from The Ekphrastic Museum to lead the way for woman writers / artists to embrace the wholeness’ that being immersed (via the hologram) in the third dimension represents. ‘The Beginning of the World’ (E,45) is therefore pivotal, as it signifies the emergence of Clair in a poem whose ekphrastic dialogue is with Constantin Brancusi’s photograph of his own sculpture, *The Beginning of the World*, (1920). I was interested in the concept of re-envisioning a sculpture (a marble egg) by taking a photograph of it; although this is a shift away from 3D back into 2D, the egg lies on a reflective surface in the photograph and there is an emphasis on contours of light and shadow. The photographer, Man Ray, describes how Brancusi took photography lessons from him but would only photograph his own works himself. The result, as here (and in another photograph, of a golden bird) was that “... it emanated a kind of aura which made the work look as if it were exploding.”²⁷⁶ I have mentioned my interest in the distortions of light through various lenses.²⁷⁷ The blending of light and shadows in the photograph captures the egg’s dimensionality; it appears to vibrate with energy. My poem is concerned with what is actually solid and what appears to be, but is not; this is an early foreshadowing of the properties of object and its holographic image and various manifestations of such in the poems in my collection:

²⁷⁶ Victor I. Stoichita, *A Short History of the Shadow* (London: Reaktion, 1999), 191.

²⁷⁷ For instance in ‘Silent City’ 2. ‘Touchscreen Alley’.

... and I can't tell shadow from reflection
on this plane where shapes
try to free themselves

though it's not the egg that engenders the shadow

but the shadow, black
bodiless stain, that emerges into existence in the shape
of an egg ...

Clair isn't yet present but the reference to the "egg" recalls the 'runny' egg in
'Melancholy and Mystery of a Street'. In surrealist painting a 'cast-shadow'
frequently symbolized disquiet. The yolk, in my poems, denotes new poetry arising
from cast shadows of solid forms that would occlude it. In De Chirico's painting,
those solid forms were the street's architecture.²⁷⁸

The emergence of Clair Obscur denotes a reclamation of the topographical
spaces of my poetry. I view her as alter ego and empathetic guide; born out of
women writers / artists who have made efforts to steer their poetics away from the
'solid shadows' of (male) occlusion and obliteration. An engraving by Roger de Piles
done in 1684 shows a solid sphere, (not an egg), half in shade, half in light;
underneath, and to one side, its cast shadow; the title of the engraving is 'Clair obscur
dans une seul objet'.²⁷⁹ I came across this illustration relatively late into the research
but it encapsulates the contradictions I wanted Clair Obscur (as a quality of
imagination also) to embody: to uphold both 'clarity' and 'obscurity' at the same
time. To dwell in obscurity is frequently the route to clarity. Such has been my
experience in the passages through this project.

The repeated structure at the start of each line in 'Soft Tissue' (E, 46) signifies
Clair gesturing to various environments and states of being and in doing so, revisits

²⁷⁸ I have been informed by the discussion of the De Chirico painting in Stoichita, *Short History*, 144 - 148.

²⁷⁹ E. H. Gombrich, *The Depiction of Cast Shadows in Western Art* (London: National Gallery, 1995), 6.

ongoing concerns: gendered passivity (“geisha”); hazard (“police tape”, “body”); emerging from the ‘frame’ (“the inappropriate frame”). The poem unfolds like of a disordered dream yet, coming near the end of ‘Right Eye / The Ekphrastic Museum’, lends itself to interpretations in the light of previous poems. This poem gestures towards a ‘breaking through’. Clair is on the cusp, revealing both her strength, in having got this far, and also vulnerability, in that she negotiates risky environments on the behalf of other women. Both identity conditions make her ‘entire’. The poems in ‘The Ekphrastic Museum’ track ways in which art has tries to burst out of the ‘frame’; from two dimensions, into three dimensions. Such acquired dimensionality is only useful to the woman poet / artist if she has agency to create freely and in her own terms. Both strength and vulnerability is suggested by the final image of the poem when the woman emerges “from an escape tunnel made of her own soft tissue”. This recalls the sustaining ‘parachute / silk’ trope. It also brings to mind the line in ‘The Arrival’, which urges, “Avoid tunnels”; those that will keep you inside them but do not lead to escape.

3.2 ix The Bite of the Dream Women (E, 47) and Opticks (E, 48)

The image of the ‘escape tunnel’ with its hint of possibility precedes to the penultimate poem in ‘The Ekphrastic Museum’, ‘The Bite of the Dream Women’(E, 47) . The poem’s title subverts that of Max Walter Svanberg’s painting *Kiss of the Dream Woman* (1959); the substitution of the more active ‘Bite’ instead of ‘Kiss’ tells us that these women will not be idealized compliant subjects. The list of women’s names provides an answer to the question posed by André Breton, (epigraph), “But who will set up the scale of the vision?” The list features names of women involved in my construction of ‘flaneuserie’ (not all named in my project); it is ‘tbc’ (to be

continued) because there will always be more names of influential forbears and peers to add. Clair Obscur heads the list.

As stated earlier, the final poem in this section, 'Opticks' (E, 48) is a companion piece to 'Peepshow ...', the opening poem, and I intended the two poems to act as 'bookends' for 'Right Eye / The Ekphrastic Museum' section as they are both in ekphrastic dialogue with the van Hoogstraten installation. In the later poem, 'Opticks', I employed a random and intuitive cut-up technique using printed pages from an online version of Isaac Newton's work of the same name.²⁸⁰ In it, Newton attempts to explain the phenomenon of the rainbow, and of the haloed light around the sun and moon. I was fascinated by these accounts (written in 1704) of his painstaking investigations; also the language used to describe them. Both science and language are 'markers' of their time. I was particularly struck by these attempts to 'pin down', and 'categorise' behaviours of elusive phenomena, recognizing, at the same time, how such experiments were precursors to the science that brought holography into being. I wanted to present a different version of the viewing the installation with its emphasis on the experience of viewing; more on sense impressions, rather than a suggested narrative. I include reference to colours arising from Newton's experiments. Slant perspectives are common to both poems (in line with my project), yet here, the voice is less a character than that of myself, ventriloquizing Clair (via Nicole Brossard, Eduardo Kac and Barbara Guest), and the poem, a meditation on new ways of apprehending 'reality'. The cut-up method provided a way of literally 'slicing through time' and facilitated 'spatiotemporal' manipulations of words and ideas. It continues the link with Dadaist practices already seen in 'Mier Bitte'.

²⁸⁰ <http://www.newtonproject.sussex.ac.uk/view/texts/normalized/NATP00032> last accessed 25th September 2016.

William Burroughs writes of the cut-up technique: that it “establishes new connections between images and one’s range of vision consequently expands.”²⁸¹

I literally ‘cut out’ extracts from Newton’s *Opticks* and stuck them onto card with glue, before rearranging via computer. Using this tactile method at this stage enabled me to prepare to give the poem more ‘texture’ by juxtaposing Newton’s language with contemporary words and phrases. I was enacting my own version of Newton’s experiment via creating a new perspective on the peepshow installation:

... and looking through each pin-hole
Pop-ups
And looking at it through the prisme
It appeared broken in two twixt the
Colours ...

Looking at the art-work via this palimpsest of contexts presents it differently now, as even more shifting and elusive:

... tiptoe to see
gold if it bee not soe thin
as to bee transparent
one colour when looked upon
another when looked through ...

I wanted to convey a sense of the vividness of the colours which have been appropriated by the poet / artist, as if they were ‘alive’ having been given new energies by being placed in the poem. This brings to mind Eduardo Kac’s statement:

... My holopoems don’t rest quietly on the surface. ...when the viewer starts to look for words and their links the texts will transform themselves, move in three-dimensional space, change in color and meaning, coalesce and disappear ...

(H, 90)

²⁸¹ William Burroughs and Brion Gysin, *The Third Mind*, (New York: The Viking Press, 1978) 5. Page references refer to this PDF Version of the text: <http://nikoskorpio.net/log/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/William-S.-Burroughs-and-Brion-Gysin-The-Third-Mind-complete.pdf> last accessed 3rd September 2015. No longer available in September 2016, or, not decipherable in this version of Word.

Newton's probed what Kac came to refer to, when writing about his holopoems, as the "behavior" of colours. This line from the *Opticks* is especially resonant for my project: "...why a blew seene by one eye & a yellow by the other at the same time produces green ..." Each eye sees a different colour. A state of 'convergence' occurs which results in the seeing of 'green', the colour I associate here with the hologram and laser, and with transformational spaces. Further to this, Newton's spelling of 'blue' as 'blew' suggests moving air; creative turbulence, inherent in Kac's poems, and in Brossard's conception of the 'aerial letter', evident again in the poem's culminating words:

... that vision thus made
aerial
transported
vibrating

As a poet reclaiming Newton's experience through time, mine is not a project which seeks to carry out exhaustive experiments on "prismaticall colours" but to accept such 'disorder' as being precursor to the senses acquiring altered perceptions (in my thesis, via the hologram):

... the sensorium
by the aether itself
transported vibrating

In retrospect, I recognize the influence of Barbara Guest in my poem's synaesthetic movements across senses and dimensions. The layout of 'Opticks' is influenced by the layout of Guest's poem, 'Passages'²⁸² (dedicated to musician, John Coltrane) in the way she combines sounds, images; her use of white space; the way that words, musical notes and colours appear to coalesce:

... *Envoi*

C'est *juste*
your umbrella colorings
dense as telephone
voice
humming down the line
polyphonic

Red plumaged birds

(CP, 30-31)

I want a reader to hold in mind poems in 'The Ekphrastic Museum', apprehended, in the scheme of my collection, via viewing with the 'Right Eye', while s / he 'moves through' the poems in the next section.

3.3 Left Eye / Through the Hologram (E, 50)

In the scheme of the collection, the poems in the section 'Through the Hologram' are to be viewed through the Left Eye and the reader has Clair as a guide. The poems bring to the fore various interlinked 'topographies' of Greenwich and the presence of Richardson's holograms of Harrison's timekeeper and the Meridian laser, both green in colour. Clair enacts her *flâneuserie* through other poems as she moves towards 'the hologram'. The spaces she inhabits are literal and non-literal. Clair has acted as guide for my *flâneuserie*, as a poet / researcher, as I negotiated the forms the poems would take and that of the project as a whole. In finding such structures I have had to negotiate, via Clair, literal and non-literal spaces. Ian Davidson's comment on what constitutes the 'space' of a poem points to such a negotiation of the literal and non-literal:

A poem might ... produce its own imagined space,
a space that is conceptual and linguistic, a space that exists

in relation to itself as well as a physical or social location
in the 'real' world.²⁸³

The distinctive space of 'the hologram' provides a further distillation of the 'imagined space' of the poem. This is true for all of the poems in *Equinoctial* but especially so in this section with its focal location and proximity of holograms and laser.

'Left Eye / Through the Hologram' begins with 'drift' (E, 52-53) where Clair recommends ways of enacting the acts of passages necessary on this journey.

'Roaming' (E, 54) depicts Clair as she enters the city but from more of an assumed omniscient standpoint this time. 'Seven Days' (E, 54-58) draws on my personal experiences of the city of Leicester which Clair 'ventriloquizes' in accounts tracked over a week. 'Last night' (E, 60) is in my voice and records how Clair and I emerge together as 'figureheads' in Greenwich. The following three poems, 'In the night garden' (E, 61), 'Partly underground' (E, 62), 'On' (E, 63) and 'Run-offs and diversions' (E, 64) contain Clair's various testimonies and recommendations for negotiating various topographical 'spaces' as she continues on her way. 'Only Dancing' (E, 65-72) is a sequence of poems that recall aspects of David Bowie's persona and career. The point is that Clair, as 'fan-girl', in drawing attention to Bowie's gender-fluidity, also draws attention to her own. 'Not in a straight line' (E, 73) links with 'drift' in recommending navigational strategies of indirection. 'The Telling' (E, 74) and 'In the Conservation Room' (E, 75) 're-tell' aspects of Martin Richardson's account of the night he made the Greenwich holograms and of my impressions of viewing them. 'Love-Song to a Meteorite' (E, 76) is Clair's love lyric to a part of the universe. In 'The Dolphin Sundial' (E, 77) Clair continues to speculate, for me, on the nature of time and love, both the meteorite and sundial being

²⁸³ *Radical Spaces of Poetry*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 63.

types of timekeeper. 'Degrees Zero' (E, 78-79) is a sestina and the form's end-words allow for reflection on the form of the poem itself and also on my project. Clair speaks on behalf of a figurehead, and in the following poem, 'Figureheads', her name is included as one of them. The 'voices' in 'Figureheads' (E, 80) are various yet, once again, Clair is the presiding presence. In 'London/sky/light /time/ line' (E, 81) the pantoum form allows a structured reflection on Greenwich space and these ongoing negotiations with language and form. It is another example of how Clair will take indirect and unexpected routes as she travels through 'the hologram' and harnesses its energies. 'Near Greenwich Park' (E, 82) features a turbulent relationship. Its form recalls a poem of John Donne's. Clair embraces the messiness and complexity of emotions along the way and draws attention to the timelessness of these. 'Time immersed ... in green' (E, 83-89) is a long, collagistic poem featuring fractured syntax and an overt exploitation of its typographical layout on the space of the page. The choice of the form (and techniques used to compose it) expresses energies unleashed by the passages through the hologram. 'Victory' (E, 90) alludes to Clair's victory at almost completed her quest. It continues the flâneuserie and Clair's 'waymarking' by means of my experiences in Greenwich. 'Through the hologram' (E, 91) enacts the literal passage through the hologram. It comprises fragments from earlier drafts of poems about Greenwich. It is Clair's sweeping overview; parts that represent the whole. The section closes with three poems, 'Quando' (E, 92), 'Adrift' (E, 93) and 'Phoenix' (E, 94) which are 'immersed' in Eduardo Kac's holopoems of the same names. Their forms draw attention to the appearance of the holopoems and aspects of the processes of their making. Although this section has been mainly concerned with the Greenwich holograms and laser, these three poems are a reminder for the reader that the passages began with an exploration of holopoetry. Their names, suggesting questioning, journeying, and resurgence, are significant for poems in this

section and the project's evolution. The closing poem 'Phoenix', denotes Clair's stepping-back (but not disappearing) and my 're-birth' as poet and researcher. The flâneuserie then continues into and through the final section, 'Convergence / Glory Sky-shell'.

3.3i drift (E, 52) and Roaming (E, 54)

In 'drift' (E, 52) Clair speculates how to get 'beyond the frame'; beyond boundaries that might hem her in on her journey:

the purpose is just
this, to push your life at the edges

to step out, blur borders so yellow bleeds
into blue and the scarlet
rectangle balances

there ... //

... at the moment leap blue ...

The flâneuserie takes a more urgent direction in this, another 'hinge' poem for the project. It is a poem where, although Clair 'ventriloquizes' me, my personal voice breaks through; there is both poise and hesitancy, an uncertainty, to avoid, the "... sharp edge of an ice wave ..." "Parachutes" recur; here, as a means of finding 'buoyancy' in the new element of holographic space; green, when "yellow bleeds / into blue ..." However, as the Right Eye vision has shown, traditional ekphrastic approaches have outlived their usefulness. 'drift' was an early poem that appeared in a slightly different form on my blog, *Heckle*. I re-drafted the poem to make the form sparer and so that groups of words appeared to 'hang' in space (as mobiles do) to convey a sense poise and balance. I also used 'right-justify' for parts of the poem to

reinforce the idea of ‘drift’ and to enhance the visual appearance. I was influenced by effects in Barbara Guest’s later poem, ‘Blurred Edge’, for instance, these lines and their arrangement on the page:

Craft and above all
The object within.

Softness precedes

blurred edge

A hint disappears inside the earlier one.

(CP, 478)

The open form enacts the symbiotic relationship between art and writing so evident in Guest’s work. The poet draws attention to in-between spaces and the blurred edges of borders begging the question of where the painting ‘ends’ and the poem ‘begins’. My excursions to Greenwich allowed me to navigate and negotiate spaces, literal and metaphorical, connected with holograms and laser. In doing so, I developed creative processes to help free me from the constraints of ‘the frame’ (i.e. anything inhibiting creative expression). Wrestling with the more personal aspects of creating were connected, for me, with coming fully into ‘being’ as a poet as an eventual consequence of being ‘a / drift’; a condition that can feel aimless and one that leads nowhere. The final lines of the poems signal the need for women to support each other in attaining ‘wholeness’ as writers, and for the success of Clair’s quest to make this happen:

... then

reach into the hands of others

to pull whatever's in there free from the frame.

'Roaming' (E, 54) has a direct connection with 'drift'. It refers to the literal act of 'drifting' through a city. "Roaming" is also the name of facility that has to be activated on a mobile phone so that it can be used when a person goes abroad. Even though this poem is set in London, rather than in a foreign city, it presents a situation of how a person may feel 'lost' in an unfamiliar, anonymous city (or even in a familiar one) while she or he is, at the same time, being 'tracked' via a GPS system on a mobile phone. There is something insidious about this, particularly when such tracking is out of a person's control. However, ironically, by switching off a mobile phone and becoming less 'trackable', a person (woman) is more 'invisible'; a mobile-phone can provide a means of getting assistance if placed in a hazardous situation.

'Roaming' is a 'gateway' poem preceding those set in Greenwich, the district of London that becomes representative of 'the city' in the collection. The poem is from Clair's perspective but draws on my experience of emerging from Kings Cross / St Pancras, stations as 'portals' to London. The tone is distanced with assumed omniscience of viewpoint. The city's 'lenses', "cracked panes masked by reinforced glass", are fragile screens barely protecting vulnerable people who live behind them, "the footsore and the time-poor". I intended a connection with the earlier sequence 'Silent City' (both have a reference to *Subway*, the ubiquitous takeaway) in their emphasis on "distorted" vision via what is seen (or obscured) at night, through windows. This poem suggests that there are identical, globalized cities that have "verisimilitude" in the way that they have been 'spawned'; in the presence of the 'dispossessed' and whatever forces (political, social) keep them so. The assumed omniscience of the 'narrator' lends another way into the 'narrative' but at the same time draws attention to a 'flâneuserie' which, paradoxically, needs steering back on

course. Claire is still on the ‘cusp’, as the final lines of the poems suggest:

Night, blips of stars,
After the exploring, the drift, shock
of new flesh, at St Pancras next day, the loss

The “exploring” is the ‘drift’ of roaming and the sexual exploration “shock of new flesh” this might lead to; both are acts of ‘agency’ yet both leave women vulnerable. The placing of words “drift”, “shock”, “flesh” and “loss”, in close proximity highlight their interconnectivity; especially so if the words are considered as ‘behaving’ like words in a holopoem where different combinations of letters would present themselves to a viewer; some, although having meaning outside semantics, leading to new insights and revised ‘vision’.

3.3ii Seven Days (E, 55)

“Who knows who / they are / anymore?”²⁸⁴ asks Australian poet, Pam Brown, in her poem, ‘Seven Days’. It is a long, thin poem (influenced by, I suspect, James Schuyler’s ‘skinny poems’, a poet whom she references elsewhere), and spans across seven pages. Each section or ‘day’ is separated by a distinctive typographical symbol.²⁸⁵ My poem, of the same title, imitates what I recognize in her poem as a ‘casual’ flâneuserie that roams between past and present. ‘Seven Days’ (E, 55) focuses on aspects of my life in Leicester; it juxtaposes scenes from memory and from the near present. Clair ‘ventriloquizes’ me once again. The poem leans towards the holographic in presenting urban experience from different perspectives. The first line this poem prepares the reader for ‘Psychokinesis’ (E, 100) in ‘Convergence / Glory Sky-shell’. The poems share a setting in a specific area of Leicester; the phrase

²⁸⁴ *Dear Deliria: New and Selected Poems* (Cambridge: Salt, 2002), p. 108.

²⁸⁵ I could not show an example of it here.

“The buildings shimmer” relates to the idea (explored in the later poem) that acts thinking can bring about shifts of perspective; of people, places and of language.

The buildings shimmer
in a night-cold haze.
Twenty
years ago the road
you walk beside
like a penitent
was the same ...

The assertive voice and conversational tone of Pam Brown’s tone attracted me and I have attempted similar here. The ‘fixed’ time-period (seven days) with each section of the poem corresponding (roughly) to a day, provides a holding-structure of sorts. It conveys time’s inexorability and, as in the lines below, a sense of ennui attached to certain days and times of day.

Monday
evening’s coming on.
Walter Benjamin’s
mild boredom
of order
of
its dampened powder ...

I think Brown is referring to how Walter Benjamin’s presents the flâneur as an enervated figure who, even though literally animated by of his acts of wandering, is a ‘spent’ phenomenon. The linguistic energy of Brown’s unfolding lines run counter to that perception; I intended a likewise energy in my poem. Clair, like the poet / persona in Brown’s poem, embraces the first person ‘I’ to communicate that which is immediately experienced as a result of flâneuserie. Brown’s poem draws attention to the human predicament of being caught within time’s boundaries, rendering us, “... little howling babies / rattling at the bars of the playpen ...” The hashtag, on the social media site, *Twitter*, is a prefix appended to the identity of a user, or to a topic

‘thread’. I separate the ‘days’ (sections) of my poems with hashtags (#); these serve as markers, inhabiting a space between word and image (as do holopoems), also heightening the poem’s visual element. The reference to a remembered Halloween in the third section of the poem, “The day the skin / between two worlds / was slit ...” offers the reader another version of the space of the holographic plate, between camera and object, on which the hologram will emerge, as though it was solid.

The journeying (of all types) in the poems so far in the section prepares for Clair’s emergence; her ‘birthing’ from the enclosing practices of surrealism; serves a purpose to demonstrate my inductive flâneuserie, and to look ahead to its development in the poems set in Greenwich.

3.3 iii Last night ... (E, 60), In the night garden (E, 61) and Partly underground (E, 62).

‘Last night ...’ (E, 60) describes Clair’s emergence; mine also, with her, as female poet/researcher. “... I was naked, and she watched me dress / ... I was ready exhibitionist to her voyeur ...” Unlike the passive nudes who are fated to be only subjects, under the gaze of the male artist, via Clair’s gaze, I am ‘clothed’ in an awakening imagination. I convey a sense of both Clair and I being on the ‘threshold’ of experience and that we are ‘scoping’ territories of the dream and river / sea. In the poem, the act of emerging from a dream symbolizes the reclamation of the spaces of the subconscious and unconscious mind from surrealism. In *The Türler Losses* Barbara Guest’s meditation on her lost watches becomes a warning against trusting ‘unreliable’ time.

... Wristwatches surround themselves with danger.
Signs. Worn clasps. Their time flies, stops.
Gallops. On a street. Dropped like an egg from a tree ...

(CP, 170)

The fact that Clair ‘wears’ time and ‘checks her watch’ and announces, “*It’s time*”, at the moment of ‘flight’ prepares the reader for the holograms of the timekeeper; also, as in Guest’s poem, that awareness of time is subjective and is contingent on the circumstances of its perception, and how it is ‘carried’. In the poem, Clair and I proceed to negotiate topographies of dream, earth, sea and sky, “... like figureheads, flares in the night-sky / bloomed then dropped ...”, and other phenomena, “smoke”, “steam”, a mixture of the two, that have the capacity to obscure vision. In Zone Two, I mentioned then, upon my first visit to the Greenwich museums, I wondered, ‘Where are the women?’, noting their representation only as wooden figureheads of ships; although some of these ships bore names of notable women from the past, those women’s achievements were not apparent in these settings. This poem reaches towards those figureheads who appear in a later poem of the same name. To make the journey, Clair and I acquire a mutual erotic identity and derive creative energies from such a union; akin to Nicole Brossard’s ‘urban radicals’ and their embracing of the ‘aerial letter’ for forging new reading and writing practices for women.

‘In the night garden’ (E, 61) and ‘Partly underground’ (E, 62) originated on my blog. I include them here as poems which contain stories of Clair’s past and to suggest her allegorical presence in ‘showing the way’ for me, as a poet, as well as symbolising “a dark night of the poetic soul” (alluded to in my discussion of ‘The Frog-Light’). Clair must fight through obscurity towards creative clarity—as her name suggests; this parallels my attempts to grapple with the relative ‘obscurities’ of new research materials (e.g. holography) to formulate ideas for the project. The poems were written initially in 2010, around the time of the eruption of a volcano in Iceland which polluted the air and grounded flights.²⁸⁶ The 2010 General Election

²⁸⁶ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8621407.stm> last accessed 25th September 2016.

resulted in an unlikely and ambivalent Conservative / Liberal Democrat coalition government. My poems play on the sense of ‘apocalypse’ conveyed by media photographs and reporting at that time. In both poems, Clair speaks of finding means of survival, and trying to avoid being wholly occluded by circumstances, “We were going to live partly underground / ... Mists, dusts ... “ It is important that she tells her story and establishes her credentials as guide. She rejects and distrusts the language and messages of manifestos (“a multi-hued muddle”). She is outside the frame, in the “world” which swirls around like an abstract painting, which she absorbs, “I am grey light brown blown broken”. The imagery also recalls the ‘egg’ from which she has emerged, “blown broken”; her head leans against “scalding yellow” as she receives an energizing infusion of heat and light. In ‘In the night-garden’, Clair reports how she has travelled through conditions, at once exotic and frightening, “... it was the Amazon / ... the highest reaches of particled air / beyond clouds, tears, salt water ...” She recognizes, after consideration of Brossard’s comment in *The Aerial Letter*, that, “... of the four elements, AIR is becoming more important, or at least as important as earth, water and fire, which are more concrete ...” (AL, 99). The “particled air” recalls Kac’s references to the letters of the holopoems being “verbal particle/s of written language in their new environment” (H, 48). This is not the domestic ‘at home’ setting of a woman who is not allowed visibility in a city. I wanted to convey, through Clair, my experience as poet / researcher of having to be out of one’s element to find another version of it, as I put it in the poem: “... communing with amphibians, devouring my young.” I have referred already to writing practices, described as “amphibious” by Luce Irigaray and Rachel Blau DuPlessis, that:

... no longer formulate in authoritarian, universalistic fashion but [are] modes that investigate and return to complications, that enact provisionality, slippage, skepticism, and the *randonné*.

(BS, 8)

These characteristics have much in common with *flâneuserie*. The reference to “devouring my young” is double-edged when coming from a woman. I interpret it as referring to refer to the destruction of early drafts of poems rather than to the literal act of eating my children. These can be viewed as decisive acts in order to begin anew, or an act of shame and concealment if the work does not live up to any real or perceived standards, established by self or others. There is a suggestion too that a poet must be single-minded in ‘pushing through’ whatever holds her back in order to be able to continue with her. These acts may or may not be linked to others which (again, as a woman poet might perceive) cause mental / psychological harm to one’s children, causing anguish and guilt as a result. I intended Clair’s words to carry all these possibilities at once. These general dilemmas for a woman poet have been my particular dilemmas and are the impulse behind poems in ‘Convergence / Glory Sky-shell’, such as ‘Psychokinesis’ (E, 100-101) and ‘Astray’ (E, 102-109). The quest for the Green Apartment is not just a quest for a room of one’s own: it is about reclaiming a self or selves especially if your creative work has been rejected, or dismissed, or you have lost confidence in it, or progress has been sabotaged. The imagination is infinite, and stretches with you through time although ‘pushing through’ to ‘wholeness’ means negotiating uncertainties and risks. This is Clair’s message in the poem, and an understanding that undertaking this research has reinforced for me.

3.3 iv ‘On’ (E, 63) and ‘Run-offs and diversions’ (E, 64)

‘On’ (E, 63) and ‘Run-offs and diversions’ (E, 64) show Clair en-route as she moves towards Greenwich; holograms and laser. ‘On’ recalls a watch I saw in the Royal Observatory on one of my visits whose tracking of time was synchronized with the movements of the person wearing it. The poem was initially in one long section. I reorganized the poem into enjambed quatrains which conveyed more of an impression of stages of a journey and of progressing forward, at this point of in collection. Clock and compass respectively orientate a person in time and space: neither can be escaped; even though you are moving forward, neither can be trusted, especially at night, “... In sleep, watch becomes // compass, hands // become needle, / join together in random nocturnal spinning ...” Viewing the hologram is a bodily experience: you have to trust your senses; what you ‘see’ from wherever you are positioned, even though it will change when you alter that position. Writing can feel like being lost: you must find your bearings inside your body. This idea is in the poem; also a connection with “proprioception”, referred to by Charles Olson as:

... “one’s own”-ception
the ‘body’ itself as, by movement of its own tis-
sues, giving the data of, depth...²⁸⁷

This is being aware a sense of the body and its place in space and of ‘projection’ of one’s sense of self in relation to it. I also had in mind, Nicole Brossard’s statement: “To get there, I had to get up and move” (AL, 79).

‘Run-offs and diversions’ is more deliberately fractured in form; the museum has been “cracked open”; there is a reference to “dismembered surrealists”. I had in mind that ‘parts’ of women often feature in surrealist art. Here, I reverse the practice by suggesting that it is the surrealist artists themselves are partial and

²⁸⁷ *Proprioception: Writing 6* (Four Seasons Foundation, 1965), extract found at <https://abodysintrouble.wordpress.com/2011/03/21/proprioception/> last accessed 25th September 2016.

fragmented. “The blind photographer” (conjured ironically Tom Phillips in *The Postcard Vision* ²⁸⁸) would be responsible for postcard scenes in which a lamppost or waste bin obscures a main view. Clair recognizes that there are acts of navigation that can destabilize a sense of who we are; searching for your old house on Google Earth, for instance, will uncover an image which is frozen in a time between your present and your remembered past, “close up, that day in 2012”. It is a house in disguise, “in cladding”, false bricks; it is almost as if a trick has been played with your memory. I intended the phrases in the middle section of the poem, seemingly drifting in white space, to be read vertically and / or horizontally. Clair’s musings are mine in trying to inhabit the uneasy ‘gap’ in time that technology has created; in grasping at ways forward for my project. There is no one answer; all possibilities and eventualities must be held in mind; on the street mobile phones with tracking devices take the place of ‘frames’ of a painting; we have a choice, (like being at a crossroads), whether to use and reset “Geolocate” or “turn all those functions off”. The poem has a slant reference again Barbara Guest’s preoccupations with time in ‘The Turler Losses’. You can’t lose time, ageing, memory, but, as in ‘On’, you can rely on your senses.

3.3 v Only Dancing (E, 65)

‘Only Dancing’ (E, 65-72) is a sequence of eight poems and, via Clair, are my ekphrastic responses to the *David Bowie Is* exhibition which took place at the Victoria and Albert Museum in the summer of 2014. Bowie’s ‘art’ has relied on his ‘construction’ of a series of different ‘selves’ and, in doing so, crossing and re-crossing the boundaries of gender. Martin Richardson provided a 3D lenticular image Bowie for my pamphlet, *Hologram*, an initiating act for this research. Bowie’s music and performances have been significant and inspirational for my creativity for many

²⁸⁸ Phillips, *Texts*, 232.

years. It is fitting, then, that Clair ‘visits’ the exhibition and tries on Bowie’s guises. Like him, she is a ‘transitional’ figure and will not be pinned-down. The V&A exhibition featured videos, costumes, writings, from Bowie in all his assumed ‘guises’, some of which were female. In these poems, through Clair, my past is refracted through the poems; the 1970s and 80s in particular. Bowie’s song references intervene as memory signifiers, “... planet Earth was blue ... // ... Time takes a cigarette... // ... Scary Monsters ...” Bowie’s compositional methods are derived from Dada; specifically, the cut-up techniques used by Brian Gysin and William Burroughs.²⁸⁹ Bowie allowed for chance and randomness in his writing methods yet was very much in control of his changing ‘image’. My use of collage techniques here (in appropriation of fragments of songs) connect with such a heritage and similarly serve to highlight the desire of the poet / artist to allow randomness and chance into the making of the poem, while, at the same time, exerting control over its form. I refer to the singer’s protean shape-shifting from the onset: “... my God, he could have populated constellations with his selves ...” (1. E, 65) Bowie’s adoption of ‘alien’ personae (e.g. Ziggy Stardust, The Man Who Fell to Earth), his ‘time-travel’, and gender-switches brings to mind Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*; in the novel, the protagonist alternates genders through historical periods. Just as Clair reclaims what it is to be a figurehead and have agency and imagination, and teaches me, so I view Bowie as a figurehead who undergoes ‘passages’ from ‘becoming’ to ‘being’; a willingness to shed one ‘self’ to undergo the subsequent ‘passage’ into another one: “goodbye / to the leather leotard, the lurex bodysuit ...” even to “the capsule” as a means of survival. (4. E, 68) I wanted to align Bowie with Clair, Kac and Brossard, as dynamic agents of change in their respective cultural landscapes. The passage through the hologram facilitates such a merging of identities. The first poem in this sequence

²⁸⁹ See more on these in my discussion of ‘Time ... immersed in green’.

recalls when I first heard Bowie's song, *Space Oddity*. Bowie wrote his song, allegedly, after seeing pictures of the moon taken from the Apollo 8 spacecraft. His 'turbulent presence' (Kac's description of holopoetry seems apt to describe Bowie) reverberated through the social and cultural landscapes of the late 1960s onwards. I look back, possibly nostalgically, to that early song as a signal of the start of historical period of artistic, literary and intellectual possibility. My generation would 'grow up' with Bowie; his songs and performances were backdrops to our lives. We could be whoever we wanted to be: "We watched, listened. Something had shifted." Poems 2. (E, 66) and 3. (E, 67) juxtapose lines from songs with incidents in my / Clair's life in the nineteen seventies, with an emphasis on the cross or ambivalently-gendered. Poem 4., from which I have quoted above, is a valedictory poem. In it Bowie's costumes not only denote his various personae but also his transitions through time and from one 'self' to the next. This serves as a mini-analogy to the 'trying-on' of poetic forms; whether to adopt or disregard them, part of my ongoing process in the project. It also denotes acts of transformation: the 'oscillation' between 'becoming' and 'being'. Clair enacts such acts of transformation; being 'holographic' and a 'flâneuse' allows for her / me to practise "sleight of selves" in compositional methods. The Bowie personae provide another fortuitous means of reinforcement. The meaning of the "scarlet kanji characters" on the white cape, "*One who spits out words in a fiery manner*" draws attention to Bowie's potent poetic energy. The "characters" are literally read in the same way as an ideogram: they convey a visual semantics which lend them open to 'interpretation' by a viewer even if the viewer cannot read their literal meaning. Kac's holopoems derive their energies from effects of light transmuted via the poet / holographer. They have emotional as well as visual impact. Kac speaks of their "behavior" as if the words have agency beyond his making; a necessary illusion. For Nicole Brossard, 'the aerial letter' is more visionary than

visual yet even its contemplation is a movement towards liberatory reading and writing practices for women. The translation of the characters on Bowie's cloak have added resonance in connection with my primary sources.

The fifth poem in the sequence (E, 69) references the video of the song 'Ashes to Ashes' from Bowie's album of 1980, *Scary Monsters (and Super Creeps)*. This was the most expensive video its kind ever produced. Its combination of solarised colour and stark black and white led one reviewer to call it a "surrealist horror film".²⁹⁰ The video technology was as innovative as Kac's use of holography would be three years later when he produced his first holopoem; as much as a challenge to traditional video making methods that favoured 'realism' as Nicole Brossard's essays in *The Aerial Letter* were to the conventional linear progression of the literary essay. In conveying something of both the landscape of the video and 'stylistic' landscape inhabited by Bowie at the time there is a reference in the poem to the "solarised beach and New Romantic hinterland ..." Bowie's flamboyant outfits (and possibly his espoused androgyny) could be linked to the New Romantic movement in fashion and music. New Romanticism, stylistically, represented an antithesis to 'punk' but like that movement, was at odds with a climate of increased political conservatism with the election of Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister in the UK in 1979 and of the ageing actor, Ronald Reagan, as President of the United States in 1980. There is an allusion to Reagan as the "cowboy president astride / a pile of white powder...", a surreal juxtaposition pointing to the absurdity of an elected president, famous for his roles playing cowboys, being astride a pile of cocaine rather than a horse. The reference to "aftershocks" and "crash-down" hint at the 'come-down' after taking mind-altering substances; the techniques of the video mimic a state of

²⁹⁰ <http://www.shocktillyoudrop.com/news/features/396297-sound-shock-david-bowies-ashes-ashes-video-horror-film/> last accessed 25th September 2016.

altered consciousness, sometimes seen as a precursor to creative work, or detriment to it. Holopoetry has offered me new ways of reading and writing; of altering my consciousness, without drugs. I wanted my poem to convey something of the apocalyptic mood of the video in which Bowie is dressed in a Pierrot costume and an elderly woman appears to berating or pleading with him. The mention of the “breastless mermaid ... life-support / useless, belly swelling ...” is based on my viewing of Liz Craft’s sculpture, *Old Maid* (below).



Figure 13. Liz Craft, *Old Maid*, 2003.²⁹¹

The name of the sculpture appears in the poem at the end of a line, in italics, after the physical description; in placing it, at first, without qualification, I wanted to communicate something of the surprise (and shock) I felt when I encountered this sculpture at the *Aquatopia* exhibition at Nottingham Contemporary in 2013: a tiny mermaid-like figure in the corner of the gallery: “... that breastless mermaid is life-support / useless, / belly swelling, / step closer, those are wrinkles. *Oldmaid*.” The effect, as these lines convey, is one of shock, even disgust, as the conventional image of the mermaid as young and youthful had been upturned. A mermaid is sexually ambivalent anyway; in myth and legend she is a siren but is sexually disempowered by having a fish’s tail instead of genitals. Craft’s sculpture of the tiny, aged mermaid

²⁹¹ http://images.marianneboeskygallery.com/www_marianneboeskygallery_com/e1dc532c.jpg last accessed 25th September 2016.

thwarts conventional expectation of a mermaid as a young woman further contributes to the mythology of disempowerment. The mermaid, and aged mermaid have been rendered sexually impotent and as redundant as the women, who, as figureheads, so often have presence only as upper parts of a torso. The final couplet of this poem draws attention to how technologically constructed this 'landscape' is; that it is as much of an assemblage as Kurt Schwitters' work. Clair's advice is that it is necessary to immerse oneself in a heightened solarised world (equivalent of 'the hologram'); to be led by the different perspectives it provides to undo any prescriptions of how one should (as a woman) practice one's art, "to reassemble / the beach how it was, in proper colours also."

In the sixth poem of the sequence (E, 70), I conflate details of my own life in the nineteen seventies with those from David Bowie's, specifically the period when he moved to Berlin in order to overcome an addiction to cocaine, "the come-down after LA / sharing a flat with Iggy." After initial chaos and uncertainty (the legacy of life in LA) it became a period of creative renewal and signalled a musical change of direction, evident in the songs on the album, *Low* (1977). The conceit in the first stanza of the poem "you open a drawer / and a song starts up, / close it, trap the music inside, // open close, open close" shows how songs are markers in time and trigger specific memories and the mixed emotions of pleasure and pain that go with them. In opening the drawer I confront my younger self; in the song and clothes I wore in the late nineteen seventies, "... gold maxi coat, purple trousers / and silver platforms." The fact that "None / of them fit", is a marker of present time and the stark reality of ageing. My own vivid clothes were outward signs of a creative personality but masked a lack of confidence in my poetry, so much so that I did not write poems from my late teens to late twenties. I began writing poetry again around the age of 27, began sending off work to magazines and became published. For a time I embraced

my ‘self’ as a poet. The combined sense of romance and risk in the poem epitomized by the lines from the song, ‘Heroes’: “*and the guns shot above our heads / and we kissed as if nothing can fall*” points to an amount of deception and grandiosity in the quest of travelling through one’s selves-maybe inevitably, and a posture a writer or other artist may have to adopt to be confident enough to put words on a page, “we can be heroes...” It is a precarious and ambivalent stance. The juxtapositions of events in my life and Bowie’s in the poem encourage a reader to consider both perspectives and what arises from that process about transitions and transformations that come about by embracing ‘other’ selves to release necessary creative energies for new work.

Poem 7. (E, 71) is in dialogue with Martin Richardson’s hologram of David Bowie (see below) a copy of which appears on the cover of a number of my special editions of my pamphlet, *Hologram*, as I have already mentioned. Martin took the original photograph for the cover of David Bowie’s album, *Hours* (1999). My association with Martin led to my gaining more of a specialist knowledge of holography and to the viewing of his work: the holograms in Greenwich. Clair captures a moment; she presents ‘the hologram’, an instance of not quite knowing what is being seen or perceived:

... he wandered out of the blue
 away from his shadow
and the window-frames leaned in
 and the shadow stretched away ...



Figure 14. Martin Richardson, *David Bowie*, 1999.²⁹²

As all the poems in the sequences are in dialogue with a performer, performances and the whole idea of ‘performing’ selves. The final poem, 8. (E, 72), refers to a literal stage performance. I experimented with shifts of pronoun from “she” to “he” but decided, eventually, to provide them both, alternately, as both are appropriate in the context of Bowie’s inhabiting of gender, and within the scope of Clair’s “sleight of selves”. Its final line, for performer and artist-and me, as researcher, is an act of playfulness, courage and confidence for taking the work and personae to the next level:

... it’s okay for anyone
to wink at the moon before going out
and not to wait
for its approving wink back.

The Bowie sequence allows for exploration of past and personae; via a popular performer and artist, my dialogues with his life and works as ‘artefacts’ have enabled different ways of exploring my preoccupations with seeing / perceiving; their attendant ambivalences and transformations towards some kind of reconciliation.

²⁹² Photograph of lenticular image by Pam Thompson.

3.3 vi Greenwich poems (1): Not in a straight line, (E, 73) The Telling (E, 74) and In the Conservation Workshop (E, 75)

The previous sequence of ekphrastic poems were prompted by my visit to an exhibition featuring the music, costumes and events in the life of David Bowie. Subsequently, David Bowie became the lens through which I refracted events in my own life and the temporal ebb and flow of my creative practice as a poet. Having Clair as narrator of the poems continued her function as guide; provided another lens for refraction of identities along with Bowie's constant reinvention as an artist via various personae. A central concern is the idea that a woman poet should not have to conceal herself in her poetry nor should she necessarily uphold the notion of a unified 'self'. The hologram brings opportunity for the woman poet to operate a "sleight of selves" in her writing practice. To further reinforce this point I have made Clair as protean a persona as Bowie; androgynous, subject to various disguises and liable to confound the onlooker as to a particular gender. In doing this I seek to confound gendered writing and reading practices that prescribe how a female poet is 'supposed' to write.

The Bowie sequence offered a reader more insight into Clair's function as Holographic Flâneuse and signals its continuation and deepening in the subsequent twelve core poems of 'Left Eye / Through the Hologram', set in the London district of Greenwich. I have mentioned that Greenwich became a main site of my 'flâneuserie' for this project after I viewed Martin Richardson's holograms of John Harrison's timepiece, K4 in the Royal Observatory in March 2013. This viewing allowed me to deepen imaginative speculation about the connections between holography and poetry which had already begun with my discovery of Eduardo Kac's holopoetry and the works of Nicole Brossard, which referenced 'the hologram' as a trope (along with 'aerial letter') to denote visionary and empowering feminist reading and writing

practices. The distinctive topography of Greenwich with its combination of urban streets and green spaces and proximity to the river provided an ideal backdrop for me to overlay my excursions with those my invented poetic persona, Clair Obscur; equally important for developing this persona was access to museums whose focus was the exploration of sea and sky. The presence of the Meridian Laser arcing across London from one of those museums (the Royal Observatory) and accounts of how it shone into an apartment in a tower block helped me find an equivalent arc for the collection and a place for the end of Clair's quest after her journey, 'through the hologram'. I have arranged the twelve poems in six groups. I considered options of staging individual Greenwich poems throughout the collection, or, alternatively, placing them together in a group. I decided on the latter so that the reader visits them as both place and distinctive 'space'; discovers them as a buried narrative which mines poetries through time so that each poem or sub-section connects with the others but has a logic in its own right. I discuss the placing and significance of each poem for Clair's journey towards the Green Apartment; my methods of composition and their relation to 'holographic' writing practice. My conceptualization of the 'Holographic Flâneuse' in this project has allowed me to bring together its critical and creative components as a wider 'poetics'.

'Not in a straight line'(E, 73), 'The Telling' (E, 74) and 'In the Conservation Workshop'(E, 75) circulate around the viewing of the holograms in the Royal Observatory. The title, 'Not in a straight line' points to the necessary indirection of Clair's journey through the hologram towards the Green Apartment, that charged creative space. My working methods for my research have eschewed linearity evident in the invention of Clair and of my methodology of flâneuserie. In this poem, reflections on a Damien Hirst installation via Clair allowed me to establish connected thematic threads. In 'The Telling' and 'In the Conservation Workshop', I have

collaged words from Martin Richardson's account of the night he made the holograms and incorporated these with those capturing my first impressions on viewing them in the conservation workshop at the Royal Observatory. Richardson's account provides a counter-narrative to mine, each perspective related but different, 'converging' in Clair's 'tellings'.

'Not in a straight line', (E, 73) links back to the diversifications through Bowie's past 'lives' and with prevalent ideas of drift and 'flâneuserie'. My ekphrastic interventions (other than with the hologram) in the collection, so far, have been with: an installation as optical device to fool the eye, paintings, film, postcards, photographs, sculptures and assemblages; the previous group of poems, for instance, were written in response to artefacts in a specific exhibition. In the scheme of the collection the arrangement of the poems broadly charts a movement from two dimensions to three; from surface to depth. Eduardo Kac needed to reach beyond what 3D art could offer to find a form that that could take his experiments with new media even further. Kac's invention of holopoetry countered museum and gallery practices where the viewer was kept at a distance from the artworks. Holography offered a means by which a viewer could interact with the art; because of this his holopoems were a democratic and inclusive artform. Holography in general and holopoetry have offered me new opportunities for ekphrastic dialogues, evidence of which are the poems in this collection. These ekphrastic dialogues with holography and holopoetry are my original contribution to knowledge; no-one has written ekphrastic poems in dialogue with holography before.

'Not in a straight line' is a continuation of the movement away from the surface in art as it is a response to an installation. It is different from other 3D works, however, as the installation comprised a room of live butterflies. The premise of the poem is Clair's visit to a Damien Hirst installation, *In and Out of Love*, based on my

viewing of the work in the Tate Modern in 2012. Like Kac with his holopoems, Damien Hirst made his artwork interactive, in as much that members of the public mingled with butterflies in a gallery. The temperature and level of humidity in the gallery replicated that of the butterflies' original tropical environments. Attendants stood nearby to remove any butterfly that settled on a visitor thus revealing an amount of artistic control in the design an artwork that appeared to have freedom of interaction as a main feature; much as Kac designed holopoems to convey seemingly arbitrary arrangements of letters to the viewer but from carefully calculated viewing-zones. However, the work was controversial as thousands of butterflies died during the twenty-three week run. New butterflies were replaced every week, their vulnerability serving to heighten themes of transience and temporality.

One meaning of 'equinoctial' is a storm around the time of the vernal equinox; a tropical storm, as the equinox is also an imaginary line that follows the equator. Eduardo Kac describes his holopoems as having "turbulent presence". He wanted this new form of poetry to embody what he saw as a corresponding 'turbulence' in social, cultural, political, technological and scientific change; for instance, the challenge chaos-theory posed to predictability in science and mathematics. I mention this in particular in reference to this poem about butterflies as the 'Butterfly Effect' is a popular term used to describe how the tiniest dynamic action, such as the flapping of the wings of a butterfly, can have a large effect somewhere else, by changing the weather, for example.²⁹³ In making this link, in my poem, between Hirst's work, Kac's term, "turbulent presence", and its associated ideas of global disruption poem,

²⁹³ This is a simplification of a complex subject. For my purposes I use it to further highlight concerns of what can be controlled and what is unpredictable, like different viewings of holographic art by individual viewers, and how spatiotemporal events of viewing come to the fore. There is an interesting discussion of 'The Butterfly Effect' in James Gleick's *Chaos* (London: Vintage, 1998), 1-31.

I demonstrate immersive ekphrasis in these preoccupations; also with Richardson's holograms, through Clair's narrative as she continues to move towards them.

The opening line of the poem, "This is the here I wish you were ...", is the first part of one of Tom Phillips's 'axioms' about postcards, "This is the here I wish you were / but it is not the here which is here."²⁹⁴ Here Phillips is drawing attention to the artificiality of so-called representations of 'reality'. Photography and acts of postcard reproduction 'fool' the public by labelling the same generic shot of a holiday town with the names of different towns. Clair draws attention to acts of calculated 'hereness' in the "mock time- // zone heat" of the gallery and imagines "... the artist watching at home on his Macbook Pro..." I don't know if there were any web-cams in the room; if so, there should have been notices about their presence for ethical reasons. However, the interventions of an artist with his or her creation from afar would be technologically possible so creating a liminal space between near and far perspectives; a "transitional zone" referred to in the poem "Viewing the holopoem" which is the Preface to the collection. The further point from this for my research is that my poems arise from, and inhabit, this "transitional zone".

Clair leads the reader imaginatively through the liminal space created by the different imagined acts of intervention between the artist and his artwork, towards the Time Galleries in the Royal Observatory. The metaphorical connection between the brief lives of butterflies and time, in the reference to "lost seconds / clinging to the walls" in the first stanza, underscores the whole poem. Paintings and objects in the Time Galleries represent attempts to exert control of the sea and sky, by male scientists and explorers, who "spit and bicker" in contests to prove their pre-eminence. John Harrison entered his timekeeper, 'H4', into a competition for the Longitude Prize (£20,000) offered by the Board of Longitude

²⁹⁴ Phillips, *Works. Texts.*, 231.

which was set up as a result of the Longitude Act of 1714. Even though ‘H4’ was the most accurate timekeeper in calculating longitude, disputes over the results meant that he never received all the prize money. Clair draws attention to the futility of such “squabbling over speed” by these male inventors; especially so, considering the speed of contemporary digital means of exploration enabling coverage of distances by “the deftest click and zoom / into a Google Universe.” Exploration by means of Google *Earth*; how it allows a viewer to zoom in and out to gain near and far perspectives, links back to “Run-offs and diversions’, and my viewing, by this means, of an aerial photograph of a former home. There as here, through Clair, I align different perspectives with different time periods: just as a hologram emerges from the intersections between laser, film and lenses, it is the intersections between viewings (in the present and near and distant past) that create the distinctive conditions for the poem to emerge. The reference to “the butterfly artists” as “collectors of chaos” refers specifically to Hirst but has can be applied to Eduardo Kac; both are artists who push at the boundaries of art yet where the resulting seeming randomness and chaos has arisen from calculated exertion of control. Clair, as Holographic Flâneuse, is a narrative device to steer the reader and, whose presence symbolically denotes the middle space between formal freedom and formal control and by which I foreground the tensions inherent in finding forms for the poems and for this overall project.

‘The Telling’ (E, 74) and ‘In the Conservation Workshop’ (E, 75) are versions, told by Clair, of Martin Richardson’s account of the night the holograms were made, (‘The Telling’); also, of my responses when I viewed them, (‘In the Conservation Workshop’), as recorded in notes at the time and in earlier versions of the poems. According to Martin Richardson, the conditions on the night the holograms were made were not ideal for such a precarious job. The weather “was blustery with heavy rain ...” (ST, 5). He conveys both a sense of being ‘in time’ and of timelessness,

“Time was fixed and time began at Greenwich ...” (ST, 6). There is a constructed tension: a sense that the quest might fail; of obstacles. Richardson says that there was a need to “... take advantage of early evening darkness due to the holographic light sensitive plates ...” (ST, 8). The equipment is time-consuming to set up; the processes, nerve-wracking, “We are marched ... through a security check ...” (ST, 8). The restrictions are set against a backdrop of wonder and strangeness, for instance, the sight of the green laser lighting up raindrops passing through it, “... making each one sparkle like highly polished emeralds ...” (ST, 8). It was the atmosphere of mystery and strangeness, towards the end of Richardson’s account, that I particularly wanted to replicate in my poem, “... windows flashing with otherworldly light, a bone-chilling storm, perhaps some uncanny experiment was taking place ...” (ST, 8).

My poem opens with a direction from Clair, to me, and to the reader: “Sail towards the story ...” recalling the poem ‘Last night ...’ where in a dream, Clair and I, fly, rather than sail. We are both figureheads, but with agency; through Clair I have been given renewed creative power. The poem reminds the reader of that flight towards the hologram, and that the voyage continues. At the end of the poem Clair shows her wonder at witnessing the transformation of object to hologram; “See how heavy/light—ness amaze ...”; a reaction to viewing the object in its ‘new’ state as it is “carried to underglass”. One of the ways I communicated the strangeness of the experience by the form of the poems was by, rearranging the linear narrative of one of my original drafts by pasting it into an online ‘text generator’.²⁹⁵ I discuss the

²⁹⁵ <http://www.languageisavirus.com/cutupmachine.html#.VinahOtbTWI> last accessed 25th September 2016. This is the text-generating engine which I have used to perform a “cut-up” technique on some of the poems in this collection. I used it when I wanted language to take me down unpredictable routes; to allow for word patterns and combinations which were fresh and unexpected e.g. the idea of “underglass time” was appropriate to describe how the hologram in the museum (literally ‘under glass’) inhabited its time and space. I a random text generator, for me, provides a way of modeling, in my poems, in various ways, effects of holopoems whereby the poet / artist has ‘written’ the poem, and knows a reader will see words but cannot exactly predict what “meaning” will arise from the combinations of

technique in more detail in relation to the poem ‘Time ... immersed in green’ (E, 83-89). The defamiliarising effect of using ‘cut-up’ software was particularly useful for disrupting the linear narrative of my original poem, and led to my adoption of a more fractured form to better convey the visual, emotional and sensory experiences that prompted the poems. This method provided a digital equivalent of viewing a hologram; presenting object or scene from different perspectives (the pasting of the original poem into the generator) to create fresh “meanings” (the “altered version”). I selected particularly resonant words and phrases intuitively, arranging them equally intuitively on the space of the page (e.g. “Storm”, “near nigh”, “raindrops”, “watch”, “incredible”, “intense”, “amaze”, “elation”, “underglass”). The phrase ‘underglass time’ emerged and I use variations on this in both of poems. It is fortuitous phrase to describe holographic ‘time’ as I experienced it when I viewed the holograms in their glass case. The timekeeper original was protected in a glass case too but in its holographic form it inhabited a new zone of ‘timelessness’. I say elsewhere that it looked as if it was sunk underneath green water; an imaginative conflation of the properties of glass, water and green (light) defined holographic time for me that day; “underglass time”, a perfect description of it.

The poems have a staggered, ‘ideogrammic’ appearance. I intended their combination of textual and visual codes to be the equivalent on the page that Kac’s holopoems in the light field and on the computer screen. ‘In the Conservation Workshop’ is Clair’s / my ‘version / s’ of the visual, sensory and emotional experience of viewing of the holograms in workshop of the museum. The contrast between the size of the Meridian laser; its raindrop ‘alchemy’; its reach over London and the “green-diode laser / size of a pen ...” which made the holograms, is

words read or ‘perceived’. I refer to this in more detail in relation to the effects created by such a method in ‘Time immersed in Green...’

deliberately drawn. Diminution of a laser signals technological advancement and, at the same time, a 'domestication' of it as it is more 'user-friendly'. Figureheads denote a diminution of women, already 'domesticated' by being ascribed various 'othernesses'; no state of advancement is to be detected in this example of diminution. My poems which interrogate these spaces, in as much as how far they liberate or colonize women. Certain words stand out in the poem's extended white space sections (e.g. "intense", "Watch", "green"); the white space is an equivalent of recall the 'light-field' via which the holopoems come into being. The Preface urges the reader to "watch metal", "watch sugar"; to be alert to greeting configurations of language whose meaning derives from (new) insights / experiences and not necessarily known syntactical and semantic constructions.

3.3 vii Greenwich poems (2): Love Song to a Meteorite (E, 76) and The Dolphin Sundial (E, 77)

'Love Song to a Meteorite' (E, 76) and 'The Dolphin Sundial' (E, 77) are poems that feature romantic relationships. Their ekphrastic premises derive from museum artefacts: a meteorite and a sculpted sundial. Both objects are 'timepieces' of sorts: a meteorite holds information about the age of the universe and a sundial records the hours according to the movement of the sun. In 'measuring' time, both timepiece and meteorite connect with the dimensions of time and space. If a holopoem for Eduardo Kac was a 'spatiotemporal event', I make a claim for the Greenwich poems in particular, by way of their peculiar provenance, to be equivalent 'spatiotemporal events' on the page.

Metamorphosis is at the heart of 'Love Song to a Meteorite'. The poem is a direct address in Clair's voice. She identifies with part of the universe. Like the hologram, the meteor is behind glass, and because it too has 'spatiotemporal'

properties, is subject to “underglass time”. It has been captured as part of the universe, a foreign body, out of its element; ‘other’ on this planet, a condition Clair identifies with, and celebrates the way the way the meteorite remains ‘itself’ even when removed from its element: “I love the way you disguise yourself as precious ... //...” yet also “make (s) rough- / hewn a must-have-look.” There is a capacity for tremendous energy, “the capacity for mass-destruction”, that the meteorite ‘contains’ itself, or which has been ‘contained’ in the act of making it an artefact to, “twinkle benignly behind glass.” When Clair reminds the meteorite of its ‘living conditions’, “you’re fixed, stuck, well-labelled”, in an affectionate tone, I wanted her words to carry the serious irony that such was / is the dilemma of many women artists and poets who have how they should practise their art prescribed by men. The phrase “twinkle benignly behind glass” has connotations of the appearance of a seemingly compliant muse in a painting. However, Clair also acknowledges qualities in the meteorite that are potentially qualities in herself; a potent energy that can be contained to eventual necessary and self-defined ends. The metaphorical premise of the poem draws attention again to the woman poet’s dilemma of ‘how to write’; how much to write with abandon and how much with restraint, and using which forms. Such tensions they have been inherent in this trying to find a form for this practice-led project. A woman poet’s ekphrastic interventions will inevitably command closer scrutiny than those by a male poet: the nuances of Claire’s address to the meteorite in the poem come from a flâneuserie that seeks to negotiate gendered prescription about how a woman should write. Even though it is now down on earth and under glass, the meteorite is not as ‘domesticated’ as some of these descriptions of it may suggest on an initial reading.

‘The Dolphin Sundial’ (E, 77) is in the form of an extended sonnet and was written in response to a sundial and sculpture of dolphins²⁹⁶ which is in the Courtyard of the Royal Observatory. I applied a time constraint of fifteen minutes for writing the poem; the number of minutes paralleled the number of lines. I also repeated end words (“shadow”, “tails”, “angle”, “season”, “sea” “twist”) in ascending and descending order. The words were randomly and rapidly chosen from aspects of the appearance and function of the sundial. The word “sun” appears at the end of a central ‘hinge’ line and is not repeated. The poem is a variation of my made-up form, the Equinoctial. The ‘hinge’ line functions of a kind of horizon for interplays of sun and shadow, and allows the reader two separate perspectives via the reworkings of the end-words in each part. Having Clair as speaker in the poem subverts the gendered associations with the sonnet form. Clair’s invites me to speculate: “Imagine we were to meet in its shadow”; to dwell in the cast shadow of an object, ‘obscure’ space between the sun’s rays and the gnomon. Clair was born out of the shadows of Brancusi’s egg, photographed by Man Ray, thus escaping the fixed form that entrapped her. This poem’s ‘flâneuserie’ is in her meditations on the artist and the materials chosen for the artwork. The sculptor has chosen “bronze” (greenish in colour) as the metal for the dolphins’ bodies because it “holds heat” and “throws off sun dazzle”, radiating this heat through the seasons, “even in winter it would warm us ...” The body of a bronze sculpted dolphin, already solid, is given an enhanced physical dimension by means of light stored as heat that continues to radiate beyond the surface ‘performance’ of “sun dazzle”. In holographic terms, this is a parallel to the energies (light waves) stored in the holographic film which are transformed into the hologram by the actions of direct light and reflection. A hologram is not literally

²⁹⁶ It is actually an “equinoctial dial”, designed by Christopher David in 1977 for the Queen’s Silver Jubilee. The dolphin sculptures are by Edwin Russell.

solid but Clair's passage through the hologram reinforces its dimensionality as a trope that (from Brossard) signifies 'wholeness' for women's reading and writing practices, and, in the scheme of this project, a state of 'convergence'. 'Convergence', in optical terms, as I have mentioned previously, is when the different perspectives seen through left and right eyes come together in what constitutes 'normal' vision. In the final lines of the poem the imaginative flâneuserie becomes literal: "We've walked in that park in every season, / Met in pubs ... sat at angles / to each other ..." On reflection I recognize the ekphrastic dialogue with the sundial and the artist's attempt to find materials and a form parallels my attempts to find forms for the poems in this practice-led project, and a structure for the thesis as a whole. The central preoccupation with a 'timepiec'" (sundial) and measuring time (daily, seasonal) connects with the hologram / s of the timepiece in Greenwich and Clair's passage through it; also the period of time that it took to complete my thesis. Clair Obscur's name means 'obscure light'; she embodies both light and shadow. The "shadow" in the poem is a liminal space in which where hologram (and poem) may emerge; as such it is a 'holding space' of speculation and possibility. My appropriation of Barbara Guest's term and subsequent invention of 'Clair' as 'Holographic Flâneuse' led to me grouping the poems in the final section of *Equinoctial* under the heading of 'Convergence / Glory Sky-shell'. In doing this I do not mean to imply, by the word, 'convergence', that there has been a 'smoothing out' or an enforced unity of the separate readings of poems in the sections, 'Left Eye' and 'Right Eye'; a return to 'normal' vision. Instead, I suggest that there is 'extraordinary' vision afforded by 'the hologram': this means that the forms of the poems are 'oscillatory' in that I continually wrestle with how best (if at all) to carry personal and emotional content, in the poems. In 'The Dolphin Sundial', that Clair and I "converge sometimes, cast

one mutual shadow” points to the difficulty of grasping both hologram and poem; of bringing together form and content.

3.3 viii Greenwich poems (3): Degrees Zero (E, 78) and Figureheads (E, 80)

‘The Dolphin Sundial’, a sculpture of dolphins and the wave beneath them, represents how nature has been transmuted into art; how one material state has been ‘made’ into another by creative acts of imagining and designing. ‘Degrees Zero’ and ‘Figureheads’ are Clair’s narratives derived from aspects of my visits to The Cutty Sark (museum) and the National Maritime Museum; specifically, to my viewing of the figureheads situated in each museum.

‘Degrees Zero’ (E, 78) draws attention to an exhibition of photography by Ansel Adams, *At the Water’s Edge*, which I viewed in the National Maritime Museum in July, 2013. As the name of the exhibition suggests, images of water prevailed. Anselm Adam wanted to express personal experience through photography and was influenced in this by a series of photographs of clouds, produced between 1933-4, by modernist photographer, Alfred Stieglitz; photographs Stieglitz referred to as *Equivalences*, a term which lent itself to multi-interpretations.²⁹⁷ The definition of “equivalence” as ‘a theoretical portal through which all manner of concepts could be brought together’²⁹⁸ could equally apply, for my project, if “equivalence” was replaced with ‘hologram’; Adams’s statement on his print as ‘equivalent’ here chimes with what I intend for my work, and how a reader might receive it:

²⁹⁷ in Phillip Prodger, ed. *At the Water’s Edge* (Peabody Essex Museum, 2012), 18.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

I call my print 'equivalent', and I give it to you
as a spectator, and you get it or you don't get it ...
but there's nothing on the back of the print that
tells you what you should get.²⁹⁹

Adams is referring to the importance of visual and emotional impact of a photograph to convey its meaning. The viewer will either 'get' it or not on these levels; it is not to be logically analysed as meaning cannot be found that way. Adams's photographs make waves and waterfalls appear to be three-dimensional, sculptural. The image of the wave in Hokusai's famous painting has already appeared in the poem 'drift'. In that poem, and this, Clair imagines the wave as 'solid'; transparent, another manifestation of a 'lens' through which a hologram can be formed. The repetition of "wave" as it is repeated via the sequencing of words in each stanza allowed for me to highlight its dual associations with light and water and how the hologram confounds what is seen: "... hard to tell real from replicant, what type of wave." Even though I have analysed the poems in my collection for academic purposes, I intend their meaning to resonate on emotional and perceptual levels, beyond what logical analysis offers. Holograms and holopoems do not have anything written on the back; Martin Richardson and Eduardo Kac have drawn attention to the emotional impact of their work. An emotional response was my first reaction to seeing holopoems and holograms. This poem furthers my practice of experimenting with a traditional 'circular' form (sestina in this case) which has repeated end-words ("beam", "wave", "front", "length", "green", "laser") to reflect on aspects of the subjects of my research; to be 'parts' to the 'whole' of both poem and project. Clair narrates the poem; as 'holographic flâneuse' she both subverts traditional gendered associations of the form and leads the reader through the poem's spaces.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

The title³⁰⁰ of my poem is a deliberate echo of the title of Roland Barthes's *Writing Degree Zero*. In this work he speaks up for a "colourless writing" meaning writing that is free of any obligation to be what language is supposed to mean. Nicole Brossard cites Barthes's ideal as a demonstration of writing as "an act of historical solidarity"³⁰¹ and, as such, it forms philosophical backdrop to *The Aerial Letter*. In the poem, a counterpoint to this act of historical solidity is when Clair urges: "Grab this length // of time and tug." The conceit in the poem is of "Time" as a length or rope and / or seaweed "... each length / pulsing like a haul, and now with greenery / of the sea ...". By way of this conceit and the repetitions of the form, a contemporary Clair takes us back through history in order to dismiss the older "sleight of eye" technology of Pepper's Ghost³⁰² in favour of the modern Meridian laser; "a laser / drenching its target, in its sure aimed beam" that has the capacity to effect transformations, not just illusions. The tone of the poem is exuberant. This exuberance resulted from my allowing the end-words to be springboards for the language and rhythms of Clair's speech as she experiences her own transformation:

I'm real standing in green.
Green narrows, then spreads—that slick diode laser //

bounces off ... / ... and I'm split ...

³⁰⁰ I also had in mind the name of the original Meridian laser, an installation titled *0 Degrees* by artist Peter Fink and Anne Bean in 1993 which was by a more powerful laser in 1999.³⁰⁰ See <http://www.thegreenwichmeridian.org/tgm/articles.php?article=14> last accessed on 25th September 2016.

³⁰¹ Trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 14. See Brossard, *Aerial Letter*, 47 and 140.

³⁰² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVheDN4F1uQlast> accessed 25th September 2016.

Through the green ‘energies’ of the laser Clair is able to transcend the private lyric moment of the single self, and the illusion of ‘wholeness’, in order to become more ‘whole’ through the ‘doubling’ of selves. In the context of this section of the collection, this altered state of consciousness via the passage through the hologram, has something of the quality of “jouissance” referred to by Roland Barthes as a feature of his “Text of Bliss”: “imposes a sense of loss ... discomforts ... unsettles the reader’s historical, cultural, psychological assumptions ...”³⁰³ Richardson and Kac have disrupted a viewer’s previous perceptions of museum artefact and poem: Brossard took this further as a feminist ideology in espousing ‘hologram’ and ‘aerial letter’ to counter acts of historical, cultural (and) psychological diminishment by men about women’s reading and writing practices. Brossard recognizes that for women, as writers, to assert one’s presence in language has long been problematical because of the practices of men by which they have been occluded. The ‘selves’ appear in triplicate in the final section of the poem. Once again, Clair envoices me as poet / researcher; also, both as ‘figureheads’. Here, there is an added act of solidarity with a particular figurehead: Nannie Dee, the figurehead of the *Cutty Sark*, named after a character in Robbie Burns’s poem, *Tam O’Shanter*.³⁰⁴ In the poem, as I have mentioned, a “cutty-sark” is a short smock or chemise. It is worn by the young, so-called, witch, Nannie Dee. Tam is bewitched by Nannie’s beauty and urges her on in her swirling dance, calling her by the name of the garment, rather than by her actual name. When other witches and spirits appear Tam turns on Nannie and pursues her.

³⁰³ I use this word bearing in mind Roland Barthes’ notion of the “Text of Bliss”: “the text that imposes a state of loss, the text that discomforts (perhaps to the point of a certain boredom), unsettles the reader’s historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with imposture thereby restricted), difference would be observed, and conflict rendered insignificant (being unproductive of pleasure).” Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, 24.

³⁰⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2013/jan/21/robert-burns-poem-of-the-week> last accessed 25th September 2016.

She jumps a ditch to escape; when she slips, she grabs a horse's tail to save herself. This is what the figurehead of the ship is holding. The representation of Nannie Dee in Burns's poem is an example of an ambivalent portrayal of femininity by a male writer: a female figure who is seen to 'bewitch' by means of her sexuality; who is referred to by the name of her garment and not by her own name and is 'punished' for the arousal that she causes in the male narrator. In my poem, Clair conjours the scene:

The tale: In short chemise, her "Cutty-sark", her waves
of hair like black whips' tongues, she swirled in front
of Tam O' Shanter, this Nannie Dee. A witch? Lengths
of legends parcel up women that way...

It is a depiction of woman as 'other' that is doubly reinforced in the character's 'reincarnation' as figurehead. Clair draws attention to the history of such 'muse-making' practices. The second section of the fifth-stanza of the poem depicts Clair and the figurehead bathed in green laser-light. Clair's narration signals the moment as transformative but also dangerous:

... Now it's just me and the figurehead, green
as I remain, if less so, and a more poison/envy glow lasers
each cell switching my blood with chlorophyll, this beam
of wood, sculpted into woman rears into air like a wave.

The figurehead, as woman, has been filtered through folk-lore narrative; being sculpted into wood (into three-dimensions) gives her no 'dimensionality'. These are masculine acts of subjugation and negation. The laser potentiates but as a technology, it can be risky, "poison/envy glow lasers / each cell ...", to be in or near it.

An expert or guide can help a person harness its energies safely. The phrase "poison/envy glow" suggests passionate emotion; at being rendered 'other' and, therefore, marginal. Clair has emerged to 'rescue' women trapped as muses; here, a woman is 'trapped' within the specific form of a figurehead and, as a result, is both

“the fatally present and the usefully real” (AL, 141); Brossard’s example of men’s reduction of real women to stereotypes denoting allure and practicality. The poem features the green laser; this also stands for the green of the Greenwich holograms. In the scheme of the collection, Clair is passing through ‘the hologram’: the poem contributes to a ‘holopoetics’ that asks a reader to view ‘nature’ with one eye, and ‘technology’ with another. In doing so would be to experience their convergence, “switching ... blood with chlorophyll”, once unsettling and amazing. ‘Viewing the Holopoem’, the Preface to the collection, has alerted the reader / viewer to expect “photosynthetic poems / in three dimensions.” In drawing on properties of holopoems, holograms and laser, the poems uphold ‘in-between’ spaces where metamorphoses can occur. The culminating lines of the poem and the sestina’s ‘coda’ prepare the reader reveal metamorphoses from immaterial, to organic, to properly human:

... At night, under green
light, figurehead reverts back to woman, laser
to meridian, arcing histories under its beam.

*

Those waves of rough sleep,
merciless beams of headlights on bedroom walls

the night’s back-to-front—
still unravelling under green laser.

beam wave
front length
green laser

Clair relates what were my experiences of staying in Greenwich as I gathered material for these poems. These involved staying in hotels and nights of insomnia, “waves of wrecked sleep”. The “merciless headlights” bring the power of the laser in another form. However, these disorientating experiences, “the night’s back-to-front”, of lack of sleep and trying to make sense of written material under the laser’s arc provide ‘liminalities’ from which creative production emerges. The hotel room in the laser’s arc is a counterpart of the Green Apartment; I am being led by Clair; the reader, as I do, trusts her on this passage until I make the rest of the way on my own in the ‘Convergence / Glory Sky-shell’ section of the collection.

The poem ‘Figureheads’ (E, 80) comprises short extracts of text derived from writings in my notebooks from my viewings of figureheads in The Cutty Sark and National Maritime Museum. I noted, for example: “Head of the *Mary Trail* -nothing is known about this vessel. *Rose of Torridge* – foundered in a gale.” Names of women were associated with damaged or lost vessels. Some figureheads could not be identified; at least, the ships they came from could not and remained as unpainted torsos. The poem communicates on visual and auditory levels. It has an open form, rendering white space as equivalents of sea and sky, where words, or groups of words, represent the figureheads navigating those spaces; at the same time, these are the spaces of the museum where visitors / viewers try to ‘interpret’ them: “This one has its eyes closed look, / Do you think she’s praying?” The hazards are rocks; the weather; the hissed sexual abuse flung at women by men when they have think the women have transgressed some imaginary moral code, “You fucking sssslag”. The name of Clair Obscur at the bottom of the page is in in bold type. Clair calls the other figureheads towards her, “My voice, over here ...” and urges them towards an agency which involves embracing passion and risk: “what does it matter / if you steer your heart off course”. The central section of the poem is particularly impassioned:

Oh diva,
let it crash into rocks
or onto a boring unpopulated shore

Clair's invocation, "diva", transmutes the figurehead / s back into a woman of outstanding talent, behaving however she wants and transcending any reductive gender-labelling. Some of the women had only existed in stories; for others, their endeavours have been documented (e.g. Boudicaa, Elizabeth Fry). The point is, casting women as figureheads is an equivalent practice to 'muse-making' by male poets and artists: decorative as they are on the prow of a ship, they become, inevitably, also associated with narratives of erasure.

Susana Gardner's sonnets from a sequence 'EBB(PORT) Sonnets from Her Port'³⁰⁵ (see below) provided ideas for the layout of my poem. Gardner has collaged what appear to be torn extracts from sonnets written by Elizabeth Barrett Browning for her husband, Robert, upon leaving England.

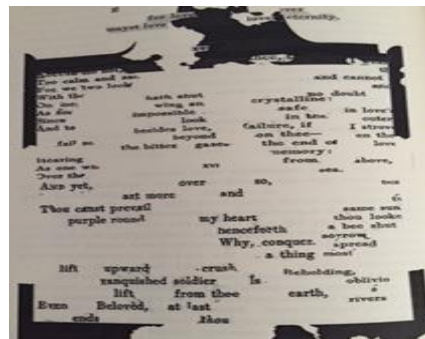


Figure 15. Susana Gardner, 'EBB (Port) Sonnets from Her Port', 2015.³⁰⁶

The shapes made by the fragments of text and the separates shapes of the white space, and the combination of the two, yield possibilities for three different readings. The sonnets were originally about leaving and farewells; the title of Gardner's sequence with the reference to 'Port' further locates them near the sea. Taking this into account,

³⁰⁵ Emily Critchley, ed., *out of everywhere 2: linguistically innovative poetry by women in north america & the uk*, (Hastings: Reality Street, 2015) 132.

³⁰⁶ Photograph by Pam Thompson.

I read the white spaces as flowing water; the words as torn letters on water of departing vessels; read both together, in relation to the broken frame, to suggest emotion which cannot be contained, and which seeks to break free.

Stéphane Mallarmé created a similar effect, as David Scott says of the layout of the poem '*Un Coup de dés*', "words and fragments of phrase are allowed, from time to time, like small craft, to slip their painters and to float free from the syntactical convoy's relentless advance."³⁰⁷ Scott is referring to how Mallarmé's configurations of words on the page disrupt a logical and linear reading of the poem and imagines the words as vessels and the white space as water. I recommend a reading of the poem 'Figureheads' that imagines the clusters of words as figureheads 'constellating' in proximity to Clair, on the white space of the page which might be sea or sky (two of Clair's domains), and moving with her, as I do, as poet, away from diminishing muse-making practices, through the hologram towards a state of 'convergence'. In the scheme of the collection, this journeying takes place via alternate oscillatory perspectives from right and left eyes and; resulting state of 'convergence' being charged, empowering and transforming.

³⁰⁷ Scott, *Pictorialist Poetics*, 145.

3.3 ix Greenwich poems (4): London/sky/light/time/line (E, 81) and Near Greenwich Park, March 2013 (E, 82)

Reading and writing holographically has involved re-working traditional poetic forms to either subvert their gender politics and / or employ the rhythms and repetitions of the form as a device for reckoning with particular ideas circulating in the project. ‘London sky / light / time / line’ (E, 81) was influenced John Ashbery’s poem, ‘Pantoum’,³⁰⁸ specifically in using collage and in avoiding a linear narrative . The pantoum is Malayan in origin and came into English language poetry through French, like so many other forms.³⁰⁹ It comprises a series of quatrains throughout which certain patterns of lines are repeated.³¹⁰ It is a slow form in which the reader takes steps forward and backward and, because of this, is a form that suits the evocation of a past time.³¹¹ The spaces of my poem are both real and imaginary, and its initial vantage-point trigger is the view across London from the top of the hill near the Royal Observatory. As the title suggests, it presents snapshots of the topographical features of Greenwich and its environs that I have featured extensively in the poems in this section of *Equinoctial*; history, and time, are central to those environs. The voice is Clair’s, giving an overview. The lines of my poem have Greenwich connections, but, as in Ashbery’s poem, their progression is via a series of non-sequitors. The pantoum’s circular repetitions comprise statements that combine the declarative, “High-rise temerity stares down history”, and allusive, “Peering into intricate machinery”. There is a contrast between the old and the new, past and present: “So often ships went down and stars went out. / Clockwork’s other version is

³⁰⁸ <https://poetrying.wordpress.com/2009/08/04/pantoum-john-ashbery/> last accessed 18th January 2016.

³⁰⁹ Strand and Boland, *Making of a Poem*, 44.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid.

in a secret room.” Before the invention of a reliable timepiece to calculate longitude, many ships were lost at sea due to the unreliability of calculations made according to positions of the stars. John Harrison’s ‘H4’ is one version of the “clockwork” in the poem; the hologram is the “other version”, hidden away “in a secret room”. The central repeated question, “Why such gaudy figureheads?” is the question that prompted my invention of ‘flâneuserie’ as a mode of enquiry. The poem operates as a meta-poem at this stage of the collection, in providing some recapitulation of place, objects, events, that have been mentioned in previous poems in a form that revisits, and speculates; in doing so, it mimics my creative process in developing the poem, the collection, and thesis as a whole. In quatrains six and seven, the repeated line, “Soon there a new handover” refers to the new technology of the hologram replacing the “old” i.e. Harrison’s timepiece; to Clair’s ‘handing over’ the final section of the poetry collection to me, and the ‘wholeness’ bestowed by the hologram, in my embracing of several ‘selves’ within it.

The date of ‘Near Greenwich Park, March 2013’, (E, 82) is around the time of the spring equinox; the inclusion of the date was a deliberate linking with the events surrounding the making of the hologram / s (in Martin Richardson’s account) and the time of my viewing them. The various connotations of the terms ‘equinox / equinoctial’³¹² led to my eventual decision to give the collection the name *Equinoctial*. Here I have appropriated aspects of the form³¹³ of John Donne’s ‘Twickenham Garden’ in accordance with my interest in topographical spaces of park and garden, and poetries that have arisen from such preoccupations; specifically, in such poems, the convention of male poets using heightened rhetoric to persuade a woman to have sex with them. Donne’s poem consists of three 9-line stanzas rhyming

³¹² See page 13.

ababbccdd. Mine consists of two 11 line stanzas rhyming abbacddeeff ghghijjkkll which “run” with varied end-rhymes to echo aspects of the Petrarchan sonnet form but to deliberately distort and exaggerate (especially via rhyming couplets) the convention of a male poet’s use of rhetorical strategies (e.g. conceit of an injured self in nature; elaborate rhyme structure) to, put basically, get sex. In my poem, Clair eavesdrops on the outpourings of a woman involved in an afternoon affair. The poem draws attention to age-old themes (and clichés) of sexual love and temporality; its deceptions. Initial references to another Donne poem, ‘The Sunne Rising’, ‘That busy old fool’, allude to the deceptive intrusions of light (distortions?) in mis-casting a transient encounter as a meaningful love affair:

I wanted the works, for us to bring
our cheating hearts for a longer fling,
but I was seasonal ...

The setting is a hotel room with the sky as ‘backdrop’ as indicated in the italicized first line, ‘*The sky, our time-piece, now that it’s lighter*’. This is part epigraph and part starting-point: from the viewpoint of a Clair / poet musing, and a line which points to those ‘anchors’ of time, space, place; timepiece and hologram. The references in stanza two are to a contemporary affair that has been “kindled” via online spaces and whose “synchronised sensations” take something from such technological intervention. “Kindle” connotes the act of trying to produce a fire and the device or reading texts electronically: like the hologram, it compacts a mass of information into a small space. Donne’s poem refers to a “dried up fountain” which I interpret as a metaphor for his lack of ejaculation; and so, sexual frustration the counterpart in my poem, “pent-up tides”, are associated with the female orgasm that is denied the speaker. The exchanges take place in a hotel near where the “gaudy” figureheads stare out into their blank-eyed futures; the “tides”, a reminder of the rough seas of their ‘demise’. I intended the appropriation of aspects of Petrarchan rhetoric to be ironic;

my use is wry and down-to-earth. The dropping of the subject “I” from the end of a line to the start of the next, an obvious rhetorical flourish, also asserts the status of the woman at the end of the poem, “...Anyway, why be tender, no lover, I. / What was hardly begun can never be over.” The poem is another ‘interior’, being set in a hotel room. Proximity to the park, and the energies the laser and hologram opens out the woman’s experience to ‘the city’; green spaces that do not enclose her as muse by means of the heightened rhetoric of the conventional love lyric written by the male poet.

3.3 x Greenwich poems (5): Time ... immersed in green (E, 83)

‘Time ...immersed in green’ (E, 83), the longest poem in the collection, arises from my experiments with an online ‘text generator’³¹⁴ (mentioned earlier) which replicates types of cut-up technique practised by Brion Gysin and William S. Burroughs. In a 1966 interview, Burroughs explains his method of cutting up and juxtaposing different pieces of text and images as a form of “time travel”.³¹⁵ Such collaging, for Burroughs, established new connections between words and images and in doing so, expanded one’s range of vision.³¹⁶ “Cut-ups”, he says, “make explicit a psychosensory process that is going on all the time anyway.”³¹⁷ In other words, we are always shifting sensory perspectives. Even if seemingly reading a text in a linear fashion, our eyes and other sensory organs are always subliminally accessing information from elsewhere.³¹⁸ For Burroughs, cut-ups are a means of breaking down

³¹⁴ <http://www.languageisavirus.com> last accessed 25th September, 2016

³¹⁵ Burroughs and Gysin, *The Third Mind*, 1.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*

what he calls the “Aristotleian construct”; “either-or-thinking”, which he considers to be “one of the great errors of Western thought.”³¹⁹ He considers the Chinese ideograph as an example of non-Western “writing” that is “already cut-up” because it can be read in many different ways.³²⁰ Burroughs had begun to experiment with the technique in 1960 being influenced by cut-up work of his friend, poet and painter, Brion Gysin, although he acknowledges *The Waste Land*, as the “first great cut-up collage”, and also works made by Tristan Tzara.³²¹

‘Time immersed ... in green’ spans eight pages. I have mentioned Mallarmé’s ‘*Un coup de dés*’ as a precedent for “holographic writing” (i.e. Kac’s holopoems); the design of my poem over several pages and the prominence of the white space of the page has Mallarmé’s. The visual / spatial arrangement of ‘Paris’, by Hope Mirrlees has influenced me here as well as the form of many poems in Barbara Guest’s *Collected Poems*.

“Time immersed ... in green’, situated towards the end of the ‘Right Eye / Through the Hologram’ section, is a pivotal poem for my flâneuserie. It represents an extended exploration of intersections between nature and technology as represented by the colour ‘green’. The location is Greenwich Park and its immediate environs; the holograms and laser; Greenwich’s ‘green’ spaces, both literal and conceptual. I take the ‘park’ (or ‘garden / s’) to be part of the urban space of ‘the city’. In ‘Near Greenwich Park, March 2013’ I appropriated part of the form of John Donne’s ‘Twickenham Garden’ to interrogate the tradition of the garden or park being a gendered meditative space for the male poet in which the poet constructs his

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid., 4.

³²¹ Ibid.

representation of a female ‘other’. The premise of my own poem was Clair’s eavesdropping on a woman’s envoicing of her feelings at the end of an unsatisfactory relationship. The reworking of the traditional form and disruption of convention were liberatory acts and the proximity of laser and hologram, and Clair’s intervention, reinforced the holographic nature of the flâneuserie.

My technique for composing ‘Time ...immersed in green’ involved a ‘fusion’ of two poems, each from a different time period (one by a male, one by a female poet) by using online cut-up software as hologram ‘proxy’. The poems are ‘The Garden’ by Andrew Marvell³²² and ‘In the public garden’ by Wendy Mulford’.³²³ ‘The Garden’ was written around 1680. It is written in nine rhyming couplets. Like Donne’s ‘Twickenham Garden’, it features a male poet ruminating on mood and surroundings. For Donne, the bleakness of the external settings represented his mood as a result of being spurned by a female; for Marvell, ruminations on idyllic external surroundings lead him to construe the garden as ‘Edenic’, *because* of the absence of any female: “Such was that happy garden-state / While man there walked without a mate”, and, as such, to be conducive to isolated and distilled meditation, “Annihilating all that’s made / To a green thought in a green shade.” In the final stanza, the poet draws attention to the sun tracking a “fragrant zodiac” of herbs and flowers. The impression is that the garden is a cultivated space constructed by the male poet as a timeless hermetic preserve involving a ‘colonization’ of ‘green’ in its pursuit. Wendy Mulford’s ‘In the public garden’ was written between 1986-88 as part of the ekphrastic sequence, ‘The Bay of Naples’, poems written in response to paintings by Howard Hodgkin. Mulford’s project interested me because she does not merely

³²² <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/44682> last accessed 25th September 2016.

³²³ *and suddenly supposing: selected poems* (Buckfastleigh: Etruscan, 2002), 24.

describe the paintings but enacts dialogues with colours and shapes within them.

Hodgkin habitually lets his paint stray onto the frame of his paintings; this suggests that what is within them cannot be captured nor contained.

Experimentation, in my research, with techniques derived from art, other poetry, and ‘the holographic’ from my primary sources, is done to test boundaries of ‘frames’ or other means of containment. Such experimentation, has been part of an iterative process in finding a form for the poems, and the project, as a whole. ‘In the public garden’ is an antithesis to Marvell’s poem: whereas the former shuts out the outside world, Mulford invites it into the poem, but also suggests that its encroachment is inevitable, thus highlighting the park as a public space, “open yourself to the politics of parks”. Mulford’s statement prompted me to combine the two very different poems, and the gender-politics at play in each, regarding the garden spaces: Marvell’s garden is the hermetic meditative preserve of the male poet in 1680 whereas Mulville’s, like Hodgkin’s painting, *In the Public Garden, Naples* (1981-2) , with its dark slashes of colour over light, suggests that this natural spaces within the city has been encroached upon and bounded by regulations; resulting public unrest under a Conservative government:

... because you arrive do not think you will be met
for the capital may be under siege ...³²⁴

There is a sense of social, personal, political flux. The poet sees the necessity of reading and writing the city; arguably, via a flâneuserie which whereby identity is located by means of topographical markers in the city:

... write back to the river from the south
bank read a passing gasometer it is
your life you may have to quit ...³²⁵

³²⁴ Ibid.

³²⁵ Ibid.

I sought similar location and reinforcement of identity as poet/researcher in my visits to Greenwich.

My combining of the Marvell's and Mulford's poems conflate language of garden / park from seventeenth and twentieth centuries. Marvell's garden is a male preserve; as was Donne's 'Twickenham Garden'. In both poems female presences are conjured imaginatively though not as active, equivalent gender equals; in the former, as goddesses who are transformed into tree or reed, and in the latter, as a rhetorical rendering of thwarted lust. Both poems draw on the conventions of the times, but such conventions, as Brossard, Pollock and DuPlessis would attest, in art and poetry, have long needed revising in the service of making women visible. I therefore intended my poetic construct, 'Time ... immersed in green' to transform the notion of the "green thought in a green shade" as a privileged, solely male, meditative space via the hologram; in this case, the cut-up software. An equivalent process in holography is the breaking down of light waves; light waves that become the 'interference pattern' on the holographic plate (the actual hologram, in fact), that become the holographic image when drenched in new, laser light. Green holographic spaces, in the context of my project, are both literal and mental spaces conducive to feminized creative practice; they are accessed and potentiated by acts of flâneuserie.

'Time ... immersed in green' begins with the collaging of extracts of language from outside the two source poems to reinforce more about the historical context of the park. There are Anglo-Saxon derivatives of the name Blackheath ('Blachehedfeld' '*Blaec Haeth*'), a district adjoining Greenwich Park. I also include information that the area was once 'common land' and (allegedly) contained a pit where victims of the Black Death were buried—a fact mentioned by Martin Richardson in his account of his walk towards the Royal Observatory on the evening in March when he made the

holograms.³²⁶ The inclusion lines from John Clare's "It's only bondage was the circling sky" and "Mulberry-bushes where the boy would run / To fill his hands with fruit are grubbed and done" is linked with the idea of 'common-land' being enclosed. There are class issues here: the 'public-face' of Greenwich (the museums, the park) (facing Canary Wharf, and all that represents, across the Thames) represent wealth; East Greenwich and environs, its opposite. I make use of the Clare / Clair doubling to offer a change of tense in the first quotation, from "was" to "is"; from male poet to female 'poet'. Even though time's 'bondage' continues, denoted by "circling sky" (see also 'sky as timekeeper' in 'Near Greenwich Park, March 2013') a state of 'enclosure' has an added resonance for a woman artist and poet than it did for John Clare who was 'bound' by his class but not his gender. My project emphasizes the continual acts of 'framing' ³²⁷ and 'bondage' that have restricted women poets and artists. This poem, in its holographic 'performance' literally represents a breaking apart of these practices. The italicized "*Not so*" from Clair after the introductory quotations draw the reader's attention away from Clare's writings (male) and the past towards the subsequent seven pages of holographically-inflected poetry in the present and which looks towards a future; energized female meditative space ('The Green Apartment' (E, 112)).

The layout of the poem results from my random selection of extracts and intuitive arrangement them. The extracts were 'cut-ups' of a combination of the two poems as pasted into the online text-generator. Statements and semi-imperatives recur in slightly altered configurations: "your ask and occupation" "grow early you

³²⁶ 'The Mores' <http://ecohist.history.ox.ac.uk/readings/clare-poems.pdf> last accessed on 19th January 2016.

³²⁷ I have been influenced by the formal variety and the practice of extending ideas of 'frame' and 'framing' into the structure of a whole collection by Erin Mouré's *The Frame of the Book* (Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1999) and Susan Howe's *Frame Structures: Early Poems 1974-1979* (New York: New Directions Press, 1976), and a combination of poem configurations as used by Barbara Guest and Wendy Mulford.

offenders” “your ask and object” “grow early you occasions”. Cumulatively, such collisions, along with phrases such as “shareholder forest”, “border green fluids exceed”, “hardware kingdom” have an insidious effect in conflating nature and technology; generosity and expediency. Marvell’s poem proceeds, in ordered stanzas, in an argument which seeks to appropriate ‘the garden’ as a masculine sanctuary whose peace and tranquility can only be preserved at the exclusion of women; a ‘colonization’ of such a space. Mulford’s poem, with its open form, eschewing of punctuation and run-on, enjambed lines, enacts a flâneuserie which is alert to encroachment and possible curtailment in a globalized city which is increasingly circumscribed by the dictates of disproportionate wealth. “Shareholder forest” – arising as a result of Dadaist cut-up method – seems particularly apt to convey mis/appropriation of ‘green’ spaces in a capitalist (and, in the scheme of my project, masculinist) economy. “Border green fluids”, a painterly image, also suggests the creative confluence of hologram and nature and how this manifests itself, as here, in a poem; one of the “photosynthetic poems” the reader has been prepared for in the Preface to *Equinoctial*. Other linguistic collisions occurred which combined the elements: “green flame”, for instance, reminded me of the single flame of Kac’s holopoem, *Phoenix* (which I discuss later in this section); the connotations of light, intensity and life. The white space of the page simultaneously represents light, air and water.

green flame

race seas

the parks

architecture

deepens

suppose gardens

will river life

It is my ambition here to demonstrate ways that reading and writing practices though the hologram through acts of flâneuserie can create poetries that “river life”: transmute that which is enclosed and exclusionary, for a woman poet / artist / researcher, that which is open, fluid, inclusive. Towards the end of ‘In the public garden’ Mulford’s both echoes and subverts the title of Walt Whitman’s poem ‘I Sing the Body Electric’³²⁸ in lines I interpret as being addressed to herself initially, but the (female) reader also:

... pulsing and steady no bus no name no number
carrying this starved body electric
hunch through early May.³²⁹

I read this as a woman / poet recognizing herself as disenfranchised in her country and her gender in a particular place and time in history. However, the woman’s creative energies are “pulsed and steady” and her body, though at this point, “starved”, is also “electric”; “starved” as historically she has not been able to “sing” her body as her poetry and sexuality in the same way as Whitman, the male poet does. Whitman conflates nature and science in the title of a poem which celebrates the sensuality of the body, and poem. I have adjusted the cut-up version of Mulford’s lines as follows: “the pulsing starved do electric / hunch speculation”. I interpret “the pulsing starved” to be the female poet / artist pursuing the creative “electric” charge via means “hunch speculation”; a reappropriation of the language of financial ‘futures’ and the masculine environment of ‘The City’ that signals poetry written through the hologram; intuitive and speculative, grounded in generosity rather than in expediency.

³²⁸ <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/174740> last accessed 25th September 2016.

³²⁹ Mulford, *and suddenly supposing*, 24.

Particular examples of the workings of ‘the hologram’ in Nicole Brossard’s work have also informed the composition of my poem; for instance, the description of the five women holidaying together can be interpreted as an example of ‘holographic flâneuserie’:

These were women who had read a lot of books and who
all lived in big cities; women made to endure in time, sea,
city and love. Border crossers, radical city dwellers, lesbians,
today electric day, their energy took on form like electricity
through the structure of matter itself ... Today a white light
made them real.

(PT, 85)

As poet and researcher my reading “a lot of books” gave birth to Clair; has enabled me, through her to be a “border crosser” in assimilating separate research areas (holography, ekphrasis and flâneuserie); using “hunch speculation” to bring them together in my poetry and poetics. I have linked my resulting acts of ‘flâneuserie’, mostly taking place in cities, with Brossard’s description of women as “radical city dwellers”; women who reclaim both urban and literary spaces that have hitherto been ‘colonized’ by men although my agenda is not specifically a lesbian one. Clair Obscur, via the hologram, gives the woman poet / artist access to multiple perspectives that signal a move away from any fixed or unified identity or gender inside or outside the work. My poetic dialogues with the David Bowie exhibition drew attention to an artist whose art arose from multiple personae and gender fluidity. The combinations of the final words of ‘Time ... immersed in green’ define that which is both thrilling and challenging but ultimately enduring, “lighting material”, for future, continuing generative creative acts.

bolt green flash

exceed heating fluids

below

lifetime for excitement

no ease

rope

is grow yourself exit beasts

lighting material

I consider this poem to be a work in progress: I intend to experiment more with the effect of 3D using different font sizes and typographical effects (e.g. bold, italic), also even more extensive spacing of layout to emphasise the contrast between the spaces of the page and the text, to highlight, in certain parts, the idea of dimensionality even more; words hanging in a space which is composed of a material made of something between the 'light-field' of the holopoem and the page. For the modernist and avant-garde poets and artists, the juxtapositions afforded by collage brought new perspectives on 'reality'; an altered vision or consciousness. Eduardo Kac acknowledged as much and took the ideas further in his invention of holopoems which, as both text and image, yielded different realities according to the perspective from which they were being viewed. For Burroughs and Kac, these experimental methods constituted different kinds of knowing; both involved technological interventions, whether 'low' (scissors and glue) or 'high' (holography and computer). Both altered perceptions. My use of the cut-up technique is a 'low-medium tech'

intervention. The online software represents ‘the hologram’; its rearrangements of a ‘source’ poem provide a range of perspectives and altered ways of knowing .

A challenge for me in this research was how to represent a feminist consciousness in ekphrastic poetry. ‘Time immersed ... in green’ does this. Nicole Brossard’s writings provided an ideological slant on ‘the holographic’. I have already defined my ekphrastic dialogues with holography as ‘immersive’. Eduardo Kac used the term to emphasise that his holopoems were made *with* the medium of holography and not made with another medium and then brought to holography. For Kac, such ‘immersion’ was necessary for fulfilment of his ‘vision’ for taking poetry into the fourth dimension. I am making a claim that the passage through the hologram, with Clair Obscur, the Holographic Flâneuse as guide, is the passage through an environment that enables new ways of perceiving ‘realities’ and offering several perspectives from which to access these. Ways of knowing offered by male writers and artists have hitherto limited *how* women could express themselves and represent themselves in art and writing. In poetry, expression of the emotional; the presence in poems of the subjective, the lyric ‘I’ has been troublesome for women poets.³³⁰ Nicole Brossard said, “I like to think of the Letter as that ‘critical space’ where we see the nature of our desires, in slow motion and on fast forward; in fine detail, and brought together as a whole” (AL, 39).

Furthermore, Brossard says:

I have a score to settle with Knowledge
because it terrorizes me from the moment
it forces me to school ... forces me to learn
more about the master’s fantasies than about
knowledge itself.

(AL, 39)

³³⁰ This is a generalization but has certainly been true in my own case and I allow the generalization to pursue my argument of how the holographic can bring new perspectives.

“Knowledge”, to be reconfigured for women through reading and writing with the aerial letter is radical and visionary, but always unsettled: “it will appear to me like something no one’s seen before, though it will simply be the continuation of one and the same process: surviving ...” (AL, 40). I reiterate here that when I refer to the passages through the hologram I am juxtaposing my reckonings with primary sources and their relationship with the holographic, emphasizing in particular the feminist lens Nicole Brossard’s writings have provided for my ideas and creation of new knowledge via new ekphrastic poetry. I have been aware that resilience and survival throughout the duration have been underpinned by Brossard’s (and DuPlessis’s) writings in particular. I have consciously sought different ways of knowing via the holographic and via different poetic forms. The passages represent the juggling of complexities; I have drawn attention to how conceptually via the hologram, such juggling, represents the process of undertaking this practice-led research.

In returning to Clair Obscur, as quality of imagination and “urban radical” (and Holographic Flaneuse), I draw attention to how Brossard positions the “urban radical” (woman) as one who is capable of producing new expansive texts:

Urban radicals invent fictions which mirror them
infinitely, like two and some thousand raindrops.
What they conclude about reality transforms itself
into a *thinking perspective* which is the very
texture of the texts they produce. Urban radicals
project something resembling memory made plural,
multifaceted mirrors reflected into real space. Text
experienced like a three-dimensional image,
instantly available like a new skin, a skin no longer
imprinted with the anecdotal symbols invented by
the terror-spreading patriarchal machine.

(AL, 81-82)

Via imagery pertaining to lenses (“raindrops”, “mirrors”) Brossard presents the aerial letter as ‘proto-hologram’. I have taken the spirit of this extract into the poems mentioned above, particularly ‘Time ... immersed in green’; also, the spirit of Kac’s holopoems. Brossard’s words, in referring to the ‘aerial vision’, denote a refusal of atrophy (political, personal sensual, creative) in an increasingly conservative age, “ ... we were, one after the other, condemned to pirate the reality holographically projected onto the mental landscape of the Eighties” (AL, 85). This is equally true of Kac’s intention in inventing holopoetry, albeit coming from the direction of the practising artist grasping the ability of new technologies to further explorations into shattering Cartesian certainties.

3.3 xi Greenwich poems (5): Victory (E, 90) and Through the hologram (E, 91)



Figure 16. Yinka Shonibare, *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle*, 2012.³³¹

‘Victory’ (E, 90) denotes Clair’s ‘victory’ at this part of the collection: she has passed through the hologram, leading me, as female poet and researcher to renewed understandings about direction in my poetry. On another day, in a similar or the same hotel to the one featured in ‘Near Greenwich Park, March 2013’, the poem enacts Claire’s ‘flâneuserie’ from the hotel, along the edge the park, to the National Maritime Museum, a site of figureheads; records of voyages, and male versions of the history of Greenwich. The content and placing of the poem allows for thematic recapitulation before Clair leaves and an act of re-positioning in which I take over in my role at poet / researcher:

... already she’s climbed the steep hill
to the Royal Observatory, marvelled at sea-clocks, their intricate
workings, their canny mediation between waves and stars
and now she finds herself inland with a sense of the river
close by ...

The poem enacts diversions taken in the pursuit of this research and again, its double ekphrasis (that with the hologram/s having been established as a constant) involves Yinka Shonibare’s sculpture, *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle*, which was originally

³³¹ Photograph by Pam Thompson

commissioned for the fourth plinth in London's Trafalgar Square in 2012.³³²

Shonibare's substituted the ship's ordinary sails with those made from fabric of traditional African prints. These prints were inspired by an Indonesian batik design; similar ones were once manufactured by the Dutch and sold to the colonies of West Africa. Using this fabric to make the sails was, for Shonibare, a political statement, drawing attention to the fact that the original 'Victory' (and ships like it) was likely to have transported slaves. Being 'stoppered in glass', Shonibare's ship has been transformed into an artifact which refracts meaning from the original, "this 'Victory', superimposed over Nelson's ..." and denotes liberation rather than colonization. I photographed the ship many times from different angles when I visited Greenwich; different weathers yielded different light conditions. For me it was a kind of "compass" that helped me gain (and regain) my bearings in the project, via Clair, and in the creative act of producing the poem:

... and it pulls her, sure as any tide
or instruments of navigation, from home to hotel, back to here.

Harrison's timekeeper would have been used as one of the "instruments of navigation" on ship that transported slaves. I was conscious of the layers of oppression and colonization, much that was not visible in its museums; of the magnifying capacity of the bottle which contained Shonibare's ship with its vivid, redeeming sails.

³³² <http://www.yinkashonibaremba.com/press/past/hms-victory-returns-to-traffic/> last accessed on September 25th 2016.

‘Through the hologram’ (E, 91) is a ‘threshold’ poem. By this I mean that, as one of the final poems in the “Left Eye / Through the Hologram’ section, it recapitulates aspects of Greenwich. I wanted an effect of ‘summing-up’ of parts but not a closing down. The reader is ushered over the ‘threshold’ of this poem towards the final section of *Equinoctial*. Clair has left. The poem comprises fragments of my Greenwich experiences sourced via other poems and notebooks. They are randomly juxtaposed. A reader, having read this far will recognize that some of the preoccupations of other poems set in Greenwich are revisited e.g. figureheads “Lallah Rook ... Maud.”; the season and weather, “February. ... Unseasonal spring.”; text-messages / relationships “So sorry”; timekeepers “Chronometer. ... Pendulum clocks”. The words and short phrases in my poem are separated by full-stops. I was influenced in my choice of form by Maggie O’ Sullivan’s use of full-stops after single word in sections of her long textual and visual poem ‘Moral Conditions’:

entering. grey. leaving. navy. tunnels. round. nautilus

lovers. night. points. to. blue. ballroom. pollen. obstruction. ...³³³

The full-stops after single words encourage the reader to pause and contemplate each word and its resonances for the whole poem, or in the case of this long poem, maybe section of poem. I wanted this effect in ‘Through the hologram’ to draw attention to the holographic feature of when one part of the hologram represents the ‘whole’ of it. As in ‘Time ... immersed in green’, a passage through the hologram, in the scheme of *Equinoctial*, means a transformation; a breaking down or reordering (as in the light waves) to gain a new ‘wholeness’ (solid object to holographic image). Language, like the letters and words in a holopoem, may yield known meaning, ‘meaning’ outside syntax or both, depending on the perspective of viewing. The eye may fall anywhere

³³³ *Body of Work* (Hastings: Reality Street Editions, 2006), 163.

within the poem: read up, down, diagonally or linearly; whatever reading is chosen, each viewer / reader will have had a different reading experience and, of the collection so far. The 'Preface', 'Viewing the holopoem' has alerted the reader not to force "convergent" vision:

... left eye, right eye
interpretive tensions
energies and collisions ...

I intended a reader to move onto 'Convergence / Glory Sky-Shell' holding on to those "interpretive tensions / energies and collisions" arising from 'viewing' the two previous sections.

3.3 xii Quando (E, 92), Adrift (E, 93) and Phoenix (E, 94)

The journey through the hologram; through the section of *Equinoctial* of the same name, culminates in three short poems whose titles, 'Quando' (E, 92), 'Adrift' (E, 93) and 'Phoenix' (E, 94), are 'immersed in' holopoems by Eduardo Kac. I have referred to each these, along with their illustrations, in Zone Two.

The titles of the three poems reach back into the collection and, collectively, present the reader with a hologram of a collection which is itself 'holographic'. For instance, one way this is manifest is when 'parts' or individual words have resonance the 'whole'. 'Adrift' brings to mind the earlier poem, 'drift,' and acts of 'flâneuserie'. The word "floats" suggests collisions of images of light and water, both comprised Clair's 'element' as Holographic Flâneuse (figurehead). In this poem I 'float' letters of the word "letters" across the white space of the page; Kac explains how he did this, working in the light field, "beyond the axes", the page's equivalent in the making of this poem (H, 53). These "axes" are the parameters within which the holopoems are designed on a computer. Once again, I link the processes of making a holopoem with the dilemma of staying within or going beyond the 'frame'; the implications of such

for me as poet / researcher in finding forms for my poems, and for the thesis itself, and for the woman poet / artist generally. Clair has negotiated boundaries and borders, taken part in the ‘doubling’ necessary in the identity-work that I have undergone here as poet / researcher. To “disrupt / fake stability” can be read as my intention in *Equinoctial*: “fake stability”, is a feminist recognition of constructions of male poets and artists; ‘worlds’ of ‘surfaces’ and assumptions of ‘fixity’, whether in poetry or art. ‘Surface’ (two-dimensional) perspectives, in this research, are associated with ‘flânerie’ as opposed to ‘flâneuserie’; the appropriating male gaze which seeks to keep women in the ‘frame’. To be ‘adrift’, via the hologram, means that women poet /artist is on the way towards escaping the ‘frame’.

‘Quando’ is the Spanish word for the question ‘when?’ In my poem ‘Quando?’ I draw attention to words from Kac’s original holopoem of the same title; “lentamente”, the Spanish word for “slowly”, for example. What Kac does in holography, I approximate on the page in the layout of the poem by exaggerating white space, “the light/slow/mind”; employing the front-slash to indicate how words or parts of words might separate in the light field and so be read with the awareness of such a separation on the page, “The lens slow / ly”. Putting words in brackets denotes the meaning of the word in two languages but also separates one of the words, “lentamente”, into parts, so offering readings of the parts alternately, or together, “lenta (slow) mente (mind or lies)”. My poems are immersed in Kac’s in that I explore conceptual ideas related to their form; in doing this I am continuing the pursuit of enquiry he began in the 1980s when he invented holopoetry. The question “When?” must have continued to reverberate for Kac as to if and when what he envisaged could ever be realized. I suggest that the question ‘When?’ will never be answered definitively for artists like Kac, Brossard and Richardson, as they set examples for me in work that is restless, questing and experimental.

The holopoem *Phoenix* stood apart from others for Eduardo Kac because it relied on the visual impact of a single image (a letter ‘W’ appearing as a bird floating behind an actual wavering flame) rather than on different views of combinations of letters. The mythological connotations of the bird who rose from the ashes connect with a literal ‘burning through’ the hologram³³⁴; the bird becomes a version of a figurehead, ‘flaring’, recalling the poem, ‘Last Night ...’³³⁵

Then we were flying
like figureheads, flares in the night-sky,
bloomed then dropped.

In the earlier poem, Clair emerges and prepares to take me through the hologram; here, I recall her protean presence in a wavering flame, not green here, as in ‘Time set ... in green’ but which “shifts red blue / magenta”. Recent new work, outside and apart from this project, has featured around the colour ‘magenta’; I even have it as the tentative title for another collection. In reflection, I can see that, the preoccupations of the project were moving me towards this, and that its manifestation is a result of finding, and dwelling in, the Green Apartment’.

In ‘the ‘Left Eye / Through the Hologram’ section of *Equinoctial* I have reinforced the idea of Clair as a guide, most specifically connected with Greenwich and its various topographies; and physically and metaphorically linking them, deriving her ‘being’ from hologram and laser . In poems in the previous section ‘The Ekphrastic Museum’, a main heading ‘Right Eye’, led the reader to a viewing where the practice of ‘muse-making’ was prevalent; the need for Clair established, followed by her ‘birth’. The reader has been led through this section via the Left Eye, its orienting heading. Clair has been the reader’s guide on the journey through the hologram; Greenwich, with its presence of holograms and laser, has been a central

³³⁴

There is a link with ‘Ash-rise’, one of the last poems in *Equinoctial*.

location. Clair has proceeded by a ‘flâneuserie’ which, through the hologram, has led to a reconfiguration of the idea of ‘green’ spaces towards a literal and mental space / place of energy and creative freedom for the woman poet. The poems in the final section of *Equinoctial*, ‘Convergence / Glory Sky-Shell’ represent explorations of what the word ‘Convergence’ stands for in my research as opposed to its literal meaning in the science of optics.

3.4 Convergence / Glory Sky-Shell (E, 95)

... Clearly the mind is always altering its focus,
and bringing the world into different perspectives.
But some of these states of mind seem, even if adopted
spontaneously, to be less comfortable than others.
In order to keep oneself continuing in them one is
unconsciously holding something back, and gradually
the repression becomes an effort. But there may be some
state of mind in which one can continue without effort
because nothing is required to be held back.³³⁶

Virginia Woolf writes these words towards the end of her 1928 essay, ‘A Room of One’s Own’, which is a long exposition around the challenges surrounding her two initial propositions that ‘a woman must have money and a room of one’s own if she is to write fiction’.³³⁷ Earlier, in Zone Two, I referred to Woolf’s descriptions of wandering through London in the essay, ‘Street Haunting’, as ‘flâneuserie’; Woolf speculates about different viewpoints, or perspectives, of what is ‘seen’ on her walk and whether they belong to different ‘selves’. The extract above revisits this idea and connects with how I have employed the notion of binocular vision (from Kac’s theory of holopoetry) to structure my collection and to encourage ways of reading it. Woolf talks about a “repression” that “becomes an effort” when trying to continue in some

³³⁶ in *A Room of One’s Own and Three Guineas*, ed. Michele Barrett (London: Penguin, 1993), 88.

³³⁷ Ibid. 3.

“states of mind”. I interpret the altered focus Woolf refers to as being akin to the state of ‘oscillation’ between Right Eye and Left Eye in holographic viewing. In the scheme of the collection, and my project, to rest too long on the Right Eye perspective alone with its ‘gendered’ boundaries and restrictions leads to a state of creative ‘repression’ for the women poet. Woolf mentally grasps at the possibility that there may be alternative: “some state of mind in which one can continue without effort because nothing is required to be held back.” The state of ‘Convergence’ as it applies to the poems of this section, and in the scheme of the collection, is akin to Woolf’s ‘alternative’ state of mind where “nothing is required to be held back”. The poems post Clair, post hologram (but inflected by it) allow in the personal and subjective exploration of my ‘selves’ as poet.

The optical act of ‘convergence’ refers to ‘depth’ and ‘accommodation’ of viewing. In normal vision the human viewing system merges into two images (of an object) seen by the eyes and deduces ‘depth’ information from the object (where it is in space, its shape, size, volume) and in doing so, both eyes are said to ‘accommodate’ the object. The same process of convergence happens when viewing a hologram because the object (appearing as *one* object) mimics the real existing object by reconstructing the light wave front that would be generated by the real object. The poems in ‘Convergence / Glory Sky-Shell’ the final section of *Equinoctial*, arise as a result of ‘viewing’ the poems in the Right Eye section with the sub-title, ‘The Ekphrastic Museum’ and in the Left Eye section, ‘Through the Hologram’.

‘Convergence’ has a sub-heading, ‘Glory Sky-Shell’. This is a phrase taken from the final poem in the collection, ‘At the end of the laser’ and, in that poem, is a visionary way of describing the energized physical and mental space of the Green Apartment.

Viewing a holopoem relies on a ‘binocular reading’, that is, different input from the letter / letters being received in each eye; this means that convergent vision does

not occur. Kac manipulates this phenomenon by deliberately creating the kind of dissonance suggested in the ‘Preface’:

Watch metal, watch sugar
no word defines
this juncture
though poetry points to it.

The “junction” is the liminal, in-between language between the words “metal” and “sugar”; it is holding opposites in the mind at the same time such as ‘clarity’ and ‘obscurity’ to bring about a condition of ‘obscure clarity’ (Clair Obscur) and its associations with imagination, from which poems originate.

3.4 i Adhuc (E, 97)

The poems in ‘Convergence / Glory Sky-Shell’ provide formal and thematic revisitations of earlier concerns but the emphasis is on my personal and subjective reflections on experience rather than on Clair’s, on my behalf.

‘Adhuc’ (E, 97),³³⁸ being ‘*immersed in*’ Eduardo Kac, is both a continuation and a development of my immersive ekphrasis generally, and specifically of how it featured in ‘Adrift’, ‘Quando?’ and ‘Phoenix’ at the end of the previous section. It also continues a preoccupation with exploring ideas by means of a ‘circular’ form, in this instance, the canzone.³³⁹ The canzone is a lyrical form deriving from European troubadour poets in the thirteenth century in that it is derived from the Latin ‘cantio’ meaning ‘song’.³⁴⁰ I chose the form for its fluidity and the way that chosen end-words (“whenever”, “light”, “floating”, “water”, “print”) allow for speculation on preoccupations in the project in a ‘free-floating’ style; also, how the

³³⁸ See image, 185.

³³⁹ Other examples include working with the sestina and my invented form the ‘Equinoctial’ as mentioned elsewhere.

³⁴⁰ Ron Padgett, ed. *The Teachers & Writers Handbook of Poetic Forms* (New York: Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 1987), 39.

cyclical repetitions of end words allow for concentration on specific words and different nuances of meaning. My poem takes its name from Kac's holopoem, *Adhuc*. Kac's holopoem includes words that refer to time in various ways ("whenever", "four years", "or never", "for eve", "forever", "evening") and are perceived in various permutations as the viewer / reader moved relative to the holopoem (H, 147). Kac's strategy is to create "an atmosphere of uncertainty, not only concerning the visibility of the words but also about the meanings they produce" (H, 147). In adopting "whenever" as one of the key words in my poem 'Adhuc' and in facilitating its repetition according to the form's patterning, I carry formal techniques relating to slippages of time and meaning, from Kac's poem, into mine. These emerge as a result of the circularity of the recurrences and exist as a series of semi-propositions that never quite get resolved. At the same time, the reader is located temporally, at the time of the vernal equinox, and topographically, in Greenwich, without overt reference to either:

The same evening, once a year, whenever
the clocks spring forward and equal day and night sees light
prolonged, softer, more settled, whenever
the moon shrinks to a tense pearl, whenever
crowds gather and wander around the floating
word scatter-plane ...

The pronoun 'you' refers to me as the poet and also is a direct address to the reader; there is a deliberate fusion of images of the natural and the technological: water, light, air; printing in 3D; its futuristic possibilities:

That way, to print,
yields itself to wonder. Then print
a whole city, inhabit it, ...

The poem has connections with the makings of a 'holographic universe' and David Bohm's suggestions that this manifests itself as a series of "enfolding and unfoldings", between the everyday, and the existential: I suggest that poetry, as new

knowledge, falls somewhere in between these two states, like the hologram being created between the photographic plate / laser and the real object itself. The poems are provisional and contingent:

However, whenever.
This is how sense comes from the words whenever
they travel, letters, words, never to be in print,
fragile as glass, empty as air, water
language which was neither here nor there, light
was / is their element, never still, always floating.

I am making also a deliberate parallel with Nicole Brossard's use of the holographic to signal (embodied in the three-dimensional 'whole' or 'integral' woman) a way of being and of accessing the world which allows its 'dimensions' (in feminist reading and writing practices specifically) to be more fully perceived. Brossard projects how the trope of hologram, as expansive space, from the vantage point of the 1980s, might be applied to fiction in her imagined future in 2000:

I thus come to imagine myself hologram, actual,
virtual, three-dimensional in the imperative of
coherent light.

(AL, 100)

3.4 ii You approach and ... (E, 99)

‘You approach and ...’ (E, 99) arises from my actual encounter with Eduardo Kac’s holopoem, *Amalgam*.³⁴¹ On the same day that I viewed *Amalgam* in London, I met with my daughter who lives in the city. I intended the poem to enact the incipient flâneuserie of those encounters. Its context is personal and political; the poem’s events took place on the day of the referendum about whether Scotland should leave the United Kingdom. The immediate premise of the poem was a meeting with my daughter outside her workplace, a building which houses various charities including the offices of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme where she works. The scheme, in London, is mostly targeted at socially deprived areas.

Kac’s poem *Amalgam* (1990) is composed of two sets of two words (“flower-void” and “vortex-flow”) (H, 51). Each set of words blends into the other as the viewer tries to read the text (H, 51). On the occasion I viewed this holopoem, I walked in front of it several times, videoing the visual transitions of the letters. I was conscious of, on the one hand, attempting to make a semantic ‘translation’ of what I ‘read’; on the other, was content to allow the viewing of ‘in-between shapes’ to suggest ‘in-between meanings’, outside syntax. I was experiencing “binocular reading” (H, 51). Left and right eyes were seeing different letters; both eyes tried to force a synthesis but this was “deterred by the retinal rivalry” (H, 51). This process, in fact, effected what Kac refers to as a “complementary reading strategy” which allows the viewer / reader to “reinterpret” what is before her / him (H, 51). In the layout of ‘You approach and ...’ I attempt to replicate my binocular reading of the poem by highlighting different perceptions of words and groups of words from different perspectives as the reader moves in front of the poem:

³⁴¹ At an exhibition of Latin American art at Earls Court, London in the summer of 2014. Some of Kac’s early New Media work was on display although only one (this) holopoem.

She's smoking with her mates before work
 on the day of the referendum but they're not thinking about
 the other country tearing itself away
 about a land mass leaving today at their conference they'll make a pitch
 for the underprivileged. how to give their awards
 to the kids in rough schools. youth clubs in Hackney not Hampstead
 all that matters. this isn't her city but it is at the same
 time she's tried it on earns its money reads on her Kindle each morning
 from Leytonstone to Victoria the forty minutes
 it takes and the changing cast around her in the carriage those old tunnels
 with their individual climates strange how in some
 places you can settle how in others you just want to fly even as your wings
 are drying in the sun you want to take off again ...

The layout of the poem is such that the 'denser' area of text on the right hand side appears to be 'pulling' at the text on the left: an enaction, on one level, of 'the other country tearing itself away', but also enacting the 'push-pull' tug of the mother-daughter bond; the shifting perspectives of the relationship as both women age and are separated by age, time, work and location. Interacting with the binocular reading aspect of the holopoem allows me to convey an event which is fixed in time and place but which becomes deliberately 'unfixed' also by the instability of the form. The more fragmented text on the left, with its augmented white spaces, allows for a reading across or down of individual words or groups of words – "changing /places you can settle". Such a reading mediates between fixity and flux; in the end, as the eyes move continually across and down the page; a sense of flux predominates rather than that of fixity. The allusion to the boy who invents a machine to turn "breath / into word speech" suggests here as elsewhere ideas of transmutation from one form or state into another (see in 'Adhuc' for instance shifts between water, air, light); in terms of the project via light, is how a solid object, appears as an insubstantial hologram. I intended the act of reading this poem; from subjective to objective stances and back again, to be a 'writing back' of emotive contemplation. I have

punctuated sentences with full-stops to allow for extra pauses (other than those denoted by white spaces) but have not inserted capital letters so that the sentences appeared more mobile. The entreaty at the end of the poem, "...watch stand to one side / young women like her a future where breathing is itself another kind of speaking / smoke another kind of saying."³⁴² suggests the relentlessness of time as the mother "stands to one side" as her daughter more fully inhabits her own life. The same angle /s of parallax from which the poem is viewed might occasionally *seem* to 'converge' into one 'stable' reading, but such apparent stability is transient, reinforcing the fluctuating closeness / distance I perceive in the mother / daughter relationship.

3.4 iii Psychokinesis (E, 100)

In the poem 'Psychokinesis'(E, 100) I move from considering the mother-daughter relationship to that of mother and son. 'Psychokinesis' is the act of moving objects with the mind. The title connotes memories of events and emotions from different times of my life. I have used a cut-up technique as formal counterpart to those time-shifts. The spatial and temporal locations in the poem overlap with those referred to in 'Seven Days' being set around the Clarendon Park area of Leicester, where I used to live when I was a student, and into my twenties. It is an area I pass through regularly and is characterized by its "red-brick terraces"; a mixture of Victorian urbanization with contemporary gentrification. By means of the text-generator (mentioned earlier) I 'scrambled' the text of an older poem, 'The Hostel Narcissus', and further rearranged the resulting text intuitively. I was also influenced by Erin Mouré's collection *Furious* (2006) at the time of writing this poem,

³⁴² I was mindful here of the title of Simon Perril's collection, *Hearing is Itself Suddenly a Kind of Singing* (Cambridge: Salt, 2004).

particularly by her statements of poetics in Part 2: 'The Acts'. Here she refers to 'transitions' in a poem, "Where the parts are seemingly unrelated but can't exist without the other."³⁴³ She elaborates on procedure:

What I am trying to do in my work these days is two things: 1) break down the logical connections/structure of "meaning" (referentiality), and 2) break down the noun/verb opposition wherein the present so-called 'power' of the language resides, in both of these while still using the surface of ordinary speaking as a reflex for emotional power...³⁴⁴

Eduardo Kac breaks down logical connections and structures of meanings in the holopoems, also breaking-down the noun / verb opposition; in other words, through the medium of holography, he destabilizes language and meaning. Mouré too deliberately destabilizes expectations of linearity in this early collection. I appropriate the condition of being 'furious' in 'Psychokinesis': it comprises a mixture of fury and sadness at time passing; at my inability to go back and change certain events. I could not literally effect time shifts by acts of thinking. "You can't move centuries", I write at one instance; yet there was always hope that it might happen, "It was red-brick terraces. / You can change this by thinking. Try." The poem arose from acts of 'thinking'; via a mental collaging; the shifting around of time and event. It is propelled by emotion; grief, anger, love. Mouré writes:

In spite of us, the connection
between words, are words things, are they the names of things,
the speed of light notwithstanding,
why do we go mad & forget everything, & be unable to speak of it ...

('Pure Writing is a Notion Beyond the Pen')³⁴⁵

³⁴³ (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2006), 93.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 74

I think that Mouré, refers to the woman poet's urgent need for expression; also, the fact that she will be silenced and / or occluded, with suggestions of the psychological damage silences might cause. My poem is a literal act of 'Psychokinesis'; has been re-worked through several drafts, been taken from 'there' to 'here'. This present version is provisional; its subject suits provisionality of language and form. The state of 'convergence' allows a poem to be 'provisional'; to be either /or, neither / nor.

Rachel Blau DuPlessis writes:

Want the poetry of shifters, a pronominal poetry, where discourses shift, times shift, nothing is exclusive or uniform, the 'whole' is susceptible to stretchings and displacements, the text marks itself and there is no decorum. Anything can be said. Want the poetry of a raggedy, hewn, and situational character, with one criterion: that it has caused pleasure in the making. Pleasure in the writing and intransigence in the space of doing writing, and that is it. My only interest: in making objects that give me pleasures; they may also be interesting enough to sustain and renew whatever regard, look, or reflection is by chance cast upon them. That is it. Period.³⁴⁶

(PG, 144)

DuPlessis says "the 'whole' " is subject to "stretchings and displacements": that, if anything, is the point of my project. 'Wholeness', by way of the hologram, comes as a result of such allowances. Pleasure in one's own work is crucial, the more I reflect on DuPlessis's words. It does not mean 'self-satisfaction' but 'immersion' where there is truth. I recognize my own bravery, trepidation and pleasure creating this poem. The pleasure was / is not a 'happy' condition as my son's illness continues but intersecting with Mouré's *Furious* in my flâneuserie encouraged me to think more deeply about the complexities of strong emotion and to find ways, not just to channel, but to embody them in poetry.

'Psychokinesis' is a poem about desire; the desire of the mother to reclaim the son; I draw on aspects of the relationship between myself and my son who, as I write,

is in his late twenties. The intersections with other poeties and writings –including holopoetry- and the use of the online ‘cut-up’ machine have allowed me to effect a condition of ‘parallax’; to view emotionally fraught relationships and incidents from different angles or perspectives. My son was asked to leave home at the age of seventeen for disruptive behaviours and subsequently moved into a hostel. I drove him there; helped him carry his bags. His frequent rule-breaking, most notably, drug-taking, meant that he could not stay there. Soon after he moved back home came his first psychotic incident and between now and then he has been hospitalized for long periods for drug-abuse and schizophrenia. They are the facts, as is the detail of his birth: long labour, forceps delivery, cord around his neck³⁴⁷, the guilt about which continues to be a source of emotional pain. A technique to deal with this was to imbue the figure of my son in the poem with mythical status and an agency he did not possess, as in the figure of the “hostel Narcissus”, whose glamour and power allows him transcendence beyond that possessed by teenagers who were able to succeed in conventional social and educational terms while he struggled:

It was the hostel Narcissus
his diamond stud winking to a street-light,
kids in black who muttered ‘chav’
him not turning
laughing into his phone.

The presence of the sheet of glass which the mother and son carry becomes a:

dark upright pool
next to which he stoops, sees his face,
a one-way sign swimming backwards,
and you’re as helpless as Echo
a bounced voice in a wind-tunnel
between adjacent factory units.

When I wrote this poem I confused Echo from the myth of Narcissus with Demeter in the myth of Demeter and Persephone and imagined Echo as a mother-figure who had

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‘lost’ her son to a life in which his identity / is dissolved / reversed /reflected /
 fragmented, all those things at once, signified by the allusion to Narcissus who falls in
 in love with his own reflection; the ultimate act of self-absorption. Such confusion
 between mother / lover archetypes demonstrates my point about the complexity of
 strong emotion and to what extent it is allowed in or kept out of poems. I chose to
 let such ambivalence reverberate in this poem. The line, “ his face, / a one-way sign
 swimming backwards”, continues to reverberate also, in its poignancy. The first and
 second sections of the poem (from “old red bricks” to “Lights up”) resulted from
 putting an earlier version of *this* poem into the text-generator for later collaging of
 certain lines. I maintained a focus on central concerns such as details of my son’s
 (traumatic) birth; old buildings (one of which housed the hostel where he lived for a
 while); changing / fusing material states (light / glass / heat-haze); the hostel / hostel
 Narcissus. A particularly interesting word combination arising from the
 ‘cut-up’ process was the phrase, “Echo at the spooky glass”, recalling the viewing of
 the first holograms; their ‘uncanniness’ of the first holograms behind their “spooky
 glass”. Time periods are conflated in the first section; allusions to birth, “nurses
 walking / bloodstains buildings shock” and the first days in the hostel; my son,
 viewed through a window and in different types of lighting; my distress and its
 transmutation into myth, ‘psychokinetic’ thinking:

Echo at the spooky glass
 can
 cold

thought parallax
 thought parallax
 up bounced

 one-way go thinking
 dark spots street-light

The poem resonates with effects of light; reflections; There are syntactical and semantic distortions via the rearrangements of language, random or deliberate. White space represents light at the same time. The poems, as all in ‘Convergence / Glory Sky-Shell’, are feminist versions of holopoems brought to the page being kinetic and spatiotemporal in form and content. There is no mythical equivalent of wanting to bring a son back from the underworld and I realise, in retrospect, that in confusing the figures of Echo and Demeter I was inadvertently writing my own version of a story that tries to do just that. The ‘underworld’ in the poem is represented by the hostel, then the “dark upright pool”: water become solid, a boy’s face captured and made ‘other’ in the “spooky glass” The conflation of mother and lover brings to light uneasy nature of the emotional attachment between mother and son. This is apparent in the poem; a failed attempt at detachment; a viewing of birth, trauma, mental illness from various angles to try, unsuccessfully, to fix their narratives; a shift from ‘you’, addressing myself, to “she”. The “you” of the poem is at once me, the reader and my son; singly or all at once:

She looks at her son as if he were someone else’s
fusion of sperm and egg
as if bloodstorms under his bones had never been

You might have seen us walking together

The shift to third person narrative “She” is a device whereby I tell my own story as if it were someone else’s. Reporting on the birth gives another perspective; distances from its trauma and associated emotion but not for long. The final section presents an “error of parallax”; acts of psychokinesis have been deceptive. “The buildings moved. // The buildings didn’t move”. The “one-way sign swimming backwards” recalls childhood; the son’s swimming lessons; a reversal of time; the “spooky traffic-

stopping children” are dummies of children placed near schools to make motorists slow down. They are uncanny in the same way that I found my first viewing of holograms uncanny but remain stubbornly solid despite having reflective surfaces; light bounces off them; they are “spooky” but are subject to no change of state via the heightened ‘electricity’ of ‘the hostel Narcissus.’ who is charged, in the poem, by light and reflective surfaces. The poem ends on a question, “But can you move the past / from there to here?” The language and layout of the poem is a way of shuffling and re-ordering in poetry that which it is impossible to do so in reality. Arguably, the juxtapositions and unexpected collisions in the poem brings a new ‘reality’ as did the collisions of words and letters in the holopoems. There is a political context to the poem, ‘You can’t put a spoke in the spiral of decline of the hosiery’, about industrial decline hinting at new ‘industries’ such as teaching, social work, web-based design, signified by the demographics of the area. The hostel Narcissus remains outside, as ‘other’; the poet mother’s voice becomes a version of her son’s, reminiscent of his first cry which forever sounds inside and around her.

In ‘Affections of the Ear’ (2000), a long poem recounting the Echo and Narcissus story derived from the original source in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, Book 3, Denise Riley sidesteps popular conceptions of narcissism and self-love. She draws on Robert Graves’s claim that narcissus oil, crushed out of the bulb, was used for “affections” (diseases) of the ears.³⁴⁸ Narcissus, she argues, before any Freud claimed him for his own concept of narcissism, “suffered not error but horror”.³⁴⁹ This is his horror of his true nature—a horror which transfixes and appals. This, I think, is a universal condition-especially when we see ourselves reflected in mirrors, windows,

³⁴⁸ *Words of Selves*, 109.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 110.

as we get older in particular realizing the image we hold of ourselves in our minds is not the same as the one which stares back at us. To be “as helpless as Echo” in the context of my poem was based on a misinterpretation of Echo as mother of Narcissus; an inability to hold a child back from the ‘dark’ forces of the world: drugs, mental illness, self-negation. Riley’s poem “wonders aloud” about Ovid’s assertion that “to make yourself heard goes out towards another.”³⁵⁰ In stating “Echo’s a trope for lyric poetry’s endemic barely hidden bother”,³⁵¹ Riley is suggesting that Echo is a figure or trope “for the troubled nature of lyric poetry, driven on by rhyme and condemned to hapless repetition of the cadences, and sound associations in other’s utterances.”³⁵² In my poem I release Echo from her conventional role (in my mistaken conflation of her with Demeter) but, in the light of Riley’s statement, this is a fortuitous error which likewise, through the hologram, complicates the conventions surrounding the lyric ‘I’ and brings to the fore the woman / poet as agent not mouthpiece.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 109.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Ibid.

3.4 iv Astray (E, 97)

The sequence ‘Astray’ (E, 97) arises from being ‘immersed’ in Eduardo Kac’s holopoem, *Astray in Deimos* (1992) (see below).

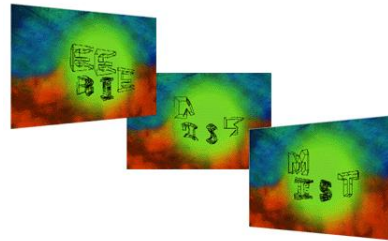


Figure:17. Eduardo Kac, *Astray in Deimos*, 1992.³⁵³

I have interpreted the condition of being “Astray in Deimos’ to be the experience of psychosis; specifically, a severe psychotic episode my son experienced in 2009. The eight poems in the sequence chart (approximately) the ‘arc’ of the episode during a period my son spent in hospital at that time. My son has continued to have psychotic episodes and even longer hospitalisations.

‘Astray’, being thus ‘immersed’, is a direct ekphrastic dialogue with Kac’s holopoem, and with his description of the processes of its making. In parts of the sequence I have conveyed the landscape of psychotic experience (‘Deimos’) in my son’s words; constructions of ‘psychotic’ discourse. I am not ‘within’ the poems as a mother figure (as in ‘Psychokinesis’) but cast myself rather in the role of ‘reporter’, of the language my son receives from Deimos. Kac refers to the symbolic implications of this holopoem, stating that it ‘explores metamorphosis as its main syntactical agent’ (H, 57). Deimos, meaning “terror”, is the outer, smaller satellite of Mars (H, 57). Kac is precise about materials he uses for the work and the intended topography of its design:

³⁵³ 30 x 40 cm. Multicolor computer holographic stereogram. Edition of 2. Collection: Museum of Holography, Chicago. Collection of the author.

This piece is comprised of two words rendered in wireframe (EERIE and MIST), which are seen through a circle of predominantly yellow light. Surrounding this scene is a web-like landscape made of shattered glass, which partially invades the yellow light circle. The circle may represent Deimos as seen on the sky from the ground, or a crater on the surface, or even a spacecraft window through which one may look down at the spacescape.

(H, 57-58)

As the reader / viewer moves in front of the work a process of “semantic interpolation” takes place whereby what is read as an adjective becomes a noun; and vice versa if the viewer moves in the opposite direction (H, 58). Kac makes a distinction between page space and holographic space in that:

The shifting of grammatical forms occurs not through syntactical dislocations in a stanza, but through a typographic metamorphosis that takes place outside syntax.

(H, 58)

Psychotic speech can often seem to be “outside syntax”: elements maybe understood, other appear to come from another language. ‘Astray’ is an exploration of the destabilising effect of a psychotic language and behaviour; the way that, for the person suffering, familiar / not so familiar, people and places become ‘other’ and are rendered at such. The first poem in the sequence acted as a ‘source’ poem for poems two and three. The online text-generator proved useful for a useful tool for ‘destabilizing’ the language of the first poem in the sequence allowing me to make intuitive decisions about the subsequent collaging of the results in other poems. The first three poems enact heightened psychotic speech and preoccupations that can occur in psychotic episodes such as delusions, hallucinations and paranoia.

There had been a literal smashing of glass preceding my son’s admission, and as premise of the first poem; not only because of this incident, my son was arrested then

sectioned. The broken glass; the ‘mystery’ of its origins to onlookers, has parallels with ‘the web-like landscape made of shattered glass’ in Kac’s poem (H, 57-58). Certain types of thinking occur relating to famous people: “queen on a tenner”, “Eminem”, “Cheryl Cole”; a fear of persecution and trying to stop it, “set bitch on fire”; distrust of people and surroundings, “Sometimes everyone pretends to be royal.” The closing words of the first poem, “Moving air”, draw attention to the stasis of being ‘inside’ the “glass house” contrasted with ‘outside’, where weather happens; the final stanza of the first poem not being an approximation of psychotic speech as such, more of a commentary on it.

The “yellow light circle” in Kac’s holopoem is Deimos, seen from the sky, a crater on the planet itself, or from a spacecraft; he offers three different perspectives from which to view it. My poem offers the possibility of all three perspectives but refracted through a ‘shattered’ mind. The “glass house” is a reference to the acute psychiatric ward and denotes also the fragility of its patients. Panels of glass in the “glass house”, in the scheme of the collection, are lenses through which fragments of experience become the eight poems in the sequence: each is a part that encapsulates the whole. The glass house, in being made of so much glass, offers illusions of lack of walls or boundaries; a shock felt by the person who crashes against a hard wall of glass when seeing only uninterrupted passage to whatever is on the other side. I deliberately exaggerate the amount of glass in the building to emphasise a sense of being literally and psychologically; also, fragility and vulnerability, as I suggest above. The topographical arc of my sequence is such that the main character moves around, being “astray” on or in “Deimos”. The different styles, however slight, of each section reflects fluctuations of physical and mental travel. Repetitions of images, phrases, distortions ensure that the reception of each poem will differ from individual to individual according how s / he ‘moves’ relative to the piece. My rendering of such

an intense, terrifying mental state can never begin to even approximate it; attempting to, as an ekphrastic dialogue with a specific holopoem, and in using collaging techniques, has provided a means for me to do this which feels personal and authentic, and ethical. I am not aware of any poems where anyone else has attempted to do similar, ekphrastic or otherwise.

Poems two and three in the sequence, then, are versions of the first poem, having been ‘disordered’ through the cut-up software. I have experimented with the layout of text and white space to give these poems a sparer form than the first, as though language is breaking down even more. I ‘seeded’ poem two with the word “eerie” from Kac’s holopoem. I inserted it twice in my poem, in the first and third parts, as it arose from the cut-up exercise: “poison eerie” and “smashing glass eerie”. This extra intervention with the holopoem added a fortuitous elision of sound and sense. Repeated words in the poem act as some kind of ‘route markers’ in a sequence whose territory and experiences are haphazard and wayward. The phrases, “They walk ... Sometimes walk... They walk”, in the first line of each section, remind me of the final sentence of Samuel Beckett’s *The Unnameable*, “you must go on, I can’t go on, I’ll go on.”³⁵⁴ denoting the push-pull of stasis and movement. In the trajectory of the sequence the further ‘derangement’ of form reflects growing inner psychic turmoil of the character in the poem. The rituals of Deimos, (the daily walk in hospital grounds with a nurse, ‘takeaway’ nights, cigarette breaks) are necessary ‘route-markers’ in unstable terrain. The name, “Eminem” is placed after “smashing” but with white space in between. The name of the rapper recurs and attains pre-eminence; stands alone. The proximity of the two words “smashing” and “corrupt” pairs them and sets them aside from the word “Eminem”. If read with the holopoem in mind, a reader might be alert to further syntactical and semantic possibilities. Part

³⁵⁴ <http://www.samuel-beckett.net/unnamable.html#last> accessed 25th September 2016.

of the sequence's operation relies on building up linguistic expectations in patterns of words / phrases which are repeated before thwarting of such expectations by the further fracturing of grammatical structures. The final word, "takeaway" is resonant and ambivalent; suggests prepared food that is bought from an outside source to eat 'at home', could also be a command, a command, 'Take away', or denote subtraction or loss, 'take away'. All meanings would echo and oscillate simultaneously for an inhabitant on Deimos.

The third poem pares language down further in a series of the words that appear 'suspended' in white space. The text-generator, for whatever reason, 'threw out' certain words in its 'disordered' version of poem 1. Poem 3. comprises those thirteen 'missing' words. I have stated elsewhere that the space of the light-field in a holopoem is the equivalent of the white space of the page. The light-field is a three-dimensional space where "texts ... change in color and meaning, coalesce and disappear" (H, 56). As Kac reminds us, "This viewer-activated choreography is as much part of the signifying process as the transforming verbal and visual elements themselves" (H, 56). I have taken aspects of these properties of the holopoem into Poem 3. intending the viewer to receive them as a 'visual mobile', which, in its sparseness, denotes breaking down of communication.

Deimos is one of the two moons of Mars (H, 57). Its personification in Poem 4. is as a person showing physical effects of illness and medication, who, "wakes groggy", but; receives the medication via injection ("depo") into "arse-cheek". The submerged connections to "moons", "arse" ...and 'to moon', as in 'show one's bare buttocks', are, to my mind, felicitous. The poem reveals the frustration of a person trapped in a world where personal dignity and lack of control prevail. To 'moon' at such privations is a form of personal rebellion. In Poem 5., there are overt links with Poem 2. which began "They walk" and mentioned some of the 'orienting' rituals of

Deimos. It is a poem of physical presence and absence. Matt, the nurse, describes hospital features that are still there and those which have gone. The reader is encouraged, to construct what is absent in his / her imagination. In Poem 6. the perspectives presented are from the inhabitant / patient and an outside commentator. The first couplet, for instance, is a manifestation of the suspicion and paranoia which is are defensive stances on Deimos. The poem continues in describing the now familiar disorienting effect of this habitation, “Time / is all wrong”, and its stabilising ritual’s, “calculated / by fag breaks, ten a day.” The double-line spacing in this poem and added space between couplets suggests falling in / through space. This signals a return to the first premise of this sequence of poems, Kac’s holopoem. The ‘text’ of the holopoem ‘performs’ against a circle of yellow light. The circle represents Deimos as seen on the sky from the ground, or a crater on the surface, or even a spacecraft window through which one may look down at the spacescape (H, 58). Poem 7. Returns bluntly to the significance of the sequence’s title: “To be astray means / you have no to and fro”, and its focus is on attempts to deal with tensions arising from being physically and emotionally restrained. The perception of Deimos as “a porthole” in the final image of Poem 8. continues the trope of travelling, albeit on water. It conflates Kac’s reference to the “circle” as a “spacecraft window”, another porthole, and has connects with the circular rim of a glass placed on a map as a means of imposing a boundary for serendipitous exploration³⁵⁵. This final poem hints at discharge from hospital, or at least, some respite from Deimos’s most destabilising effects. There are no rewards for surviving such and no guarantee the traveller will not return.

³⁵⁵ See my “found poem”, ‘Walking the Circle’ in Zone Two, 202.

‘Psychokinesis’ and ‘Astray’ as more personal and direct ekphrastic dialogues with holopoetry than poems in the previous section, ‘Right Eye / Through the Hologram’, signal, as well as what I have discussed above, an assimilation of the poetics of Brossard, DuPlessis, Guest, Riley and others, in creating, what DuPlessis refers to as, “the poetry of shifters, a pronominal poetry, ... where discourses shift, times shift, nothing is exclusive or uniform ...” (PG, 144).

3.4 v Ash-rise (E, 110)

Earlier drafts of ‘Ash-rise’ (E, 110) derive from ekphrastic engagement with images of eruptions of a volcano in Iceland whose clouds of ash grounded flights and drifted across skies.³⁵⁶ The ash-cloud obscured vision and created potential hazards. Here, I step aside from my own poems to orientate the reader towards the two final poems in the collection. This poem denotes a literal and metaphorical rising through or above the “ash” particles to the renewed vision and embodiment of the Green Apartment of the subsequent poem. The “empty house of the Gothic season” recalls the concept of ‘the museum’ as that I have worked with in my research. As narrator of the poem, I comment on behalf of other women poets and artists who have been led to believe that they would find ‘wholeness’ there: that “it was not just a stage set / and had dimensions ...” My poem refers the reader to the start of the project where I make connections between poem and hologram, suggesting that the perspectives it affords for perceiving ‘reality’ can offer creatively rewarding means of ekphrastic dialogue for women poets. “Wreckers of light and sound” are male poets, artists or other ‘commentators’ who might suppress and even ‘kill’ women’s writing and art. The poem provides a meta-commentary on my project: at first, I was unable to perceive

³⁵⁶ <http://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/volcanic-ash-cloud-from-iceland-grounds-all-uk-flights-1945547.html> last accessed September 25th 2016

the potential ‘dimensions’ of the research. I needed to be led by experimentation, take risks in “a place full of holes and jump-cuts” to draw together different poetics and poetics in fresh ways. The poem draws attention to time shifts that the hologram has enabled; to processes of practice-based research which proceed by a non-linear process; of juxtapositions, elisions, gaps, collages; To be “caught in the hinge / of the world that presses in” is to be on a cusp of something which opens out. The reference to revisiting the sky “with planes” is a sign of clarity returning; of new vision; being “wide-eyed”; seeing through new lenses, that is, holographically. Convergence, paradoxically is to accept, and dwell within, whatever binocular vision bestows. To be caught “in the hinge of the world”, on / in its equinox, allows you to test your ‘vision’ of its ‘realities’ with not just your eyes but with your whole body. The ash will rise to reveal ‘a world that has “skies / re-visited by ‘planes”, and any cloud of ash that remains for you to look through will be a source of renewed original creative energy, “... and if we are wide-eyed / it’s because we are only new to all of this, and this to us.” I wanted convey here a sense of what we research in the world; what we discover and use, is in some way, at the same time, researching, finding out about, and using us.

3.4 vi The Green Apartment (E, 111)

‘The Green Apartment’ (E, 111) is the penultimate, rather than final, poem in *Equinoctial*. I have mentioned that Clair’s quest through the hologram is to find the Green Apartment. This is a literal and mental creative space; a 21st century equivalent of Virginia Woolf’s ‘A Room of One’s Own’ as a preserved space for women writers to be able to write without censor, censure and interruption. It is forged from ‘holopoetics’ and unearthed by the Holographic Flâneuse. The poem’s premise derives from Martin Richardson’s account of the night he made the Greenwich

holograms. I have said already that I detected elements of a romantic quest in ‘the telling’ of his story. Writing about the green Meridian laser, Richardson noted the intensity of its beam and how it conveys a “sense of primeval freedom and childlike wonder” (ST, 7). Internet reports had said how the beam had stretched across London and shone into a newly-built apartment. In 2014, fears about the health and safety of construction workers resulted in the beam being switched off so it could be tilted, by extra degrees, to clear the Stratford Plaza building of executive apartments, which were being built four miles away from Greenwich.³⁵⁷ My poem, ‘The Green Apartment’, continues imaginative speculation about the laser as a source of mystery, power and potential risk. Clair has led me here. The poem dips in and out of ‘facts’ of my own life: for example, visits to London via St Pancras; “my fur collar”, reference to the collar of my fake-fur coat, associated with ‘glamour’; memories of walking London, alone or with my husband; my husband’s work as a builder. The literal ‘facts’ of the poems co-exist with the presence of ‘green’; the presence of ‘green’ in my project lifts the poems above literal facts into ‘the speculative’; a place of creative possibility where poet and language coexist in its electrified field: the “apartment in Elektron Towers”. This sense of possibility in language in this poem, via the hologram / laser’, is equivalent to the “electric / hunch speculation” of ‘Time set ... in green’. Laser, hologram and flâneuserie have made the topographies of Greenwich dynamic: streets, museums, sea, river, park are embodied as such in this poem. At the end of Clair’s quest, I acknowledge that to write, and to be ‘whole’, in four dimensions, is to take one of two choices, “either press / myself invisible against a wall, or step into its blaze”. The “blaze” is the laser, which is also described as a “green blade” or “one of several rivers you were considering / to swim in...” although it could equally apply to ‘the hologram’. The “you” being addressed here is at once,

³⁵⁷ ‘The Greenwich Visitor’, No 51, January, 2015, 3.

me, the reader, and my husband, the other person featured in the poem. I convey my experience of the green apartment in synaesthetic terms in the poem: the laser, in actuality, being immaterial and comprised of light; is associated with sharpness, (“slicing its green blade”), and heat, (“blaze”); a danger of being hurt or consumed. “Blaze” is juxtaposed against “rivers”; the choice being offered is to “swim”, rather than “drown”. In ‘The Green Apartment’ pronominal shifts, not just between myself and Clair this time, are between myself as poet / woman in act of living a life, and also my husband, who too, is undergoing an act of (unspecified) transformation in the poem, via the act of my looking:

... and I looked again and the side
of his face was silvered with time, and when he moved,

the mottling started, like a mirror worn out with old
mercury, we were thinking it into myth as we stood,
different ones.

The poem comprises four, mainly-enjambed, five-line stanzas, whose long sentences enact ‘spoken thought’. There is an audio version online in which this intention is further conveyed by my conversational style of delivery.³⁵⁸ The final stanza points to both the writing of this poem, and to all poems in ‘Convergence / Glory Sky-Shell’, having “the key to the room where I could undress / my imagination in green shade, or green light, both”, and the (re-) writing of the marriage, “as if it was all to come, / as if marriage wasn’t something a person could walk through’. That is, a hologram. To walk ‘through the hologram’ is to be able to make a binocular reading of one’s life eventually finding a room of one’s own (literal or metaphorical space); the room does not necessarily exclude others (the, possibly ambitious, hope is that they will be supportive) and seeks to attain convergent vision in ‘authentic’ poems which don’t censor content or mode of expression to gain male critical approval. Appropriating

³⁵⁸ <http://antiphon.org.uk/wordpress/?tag=issue-17> My poem is on here in print and as a sound-file. Last accessed 25th September 2016.

previous stories, or inventing other versions, as Clair has shown, are meaningful ways to do this. It is not possible to force convergent vision when right and left eyes view different things as a result of the artist's deliberate design of the artwork, be it poem, hologram or holopoem. However in the writing of the poems, the invention of Clair, and the process of practice-based research, and in the spirit of holopoetry. I claim convergence here as being the act of holding complexities in the eye and mind at the same time.

3.4 vii At the end of the laser (E, 112)

‘At the end of the laser’, the title of the final poem in *Equinoctial*, plays on the idea of ‘the end of the rainbow’ and what might be found there. It is not my intention to discuss myths and legends associated with the rainbow, only to say that there are many, from across different cultures and with overlaps between them. ‘Treasure’ found at the end of the rainbow is frequently as elusive as the rainbow itself, disappearing almost as soon as it has appeared. It is fitting for the reader, at the end of *Equinoctial*, to contemplate ‘The Green Apartment’ and ‘The end of the laser’ as places where ‘treasures’ might be found: the laser has arced the collection, whether as actual laser or as hologram, the trajectory of the arc has been negotiated by Clair Obscur, the Holographic Flâneuse to bring me to where I wrote this poem when unable to sleep in the early hours of one morning in the summer of 2014. The poem is little altered from that first draft. I intended the language and the poem's layout to create the impression of moving clouds and tides. This impression is reinforced via the echoing of lines from the ending of the collection's Preface, ‘Viewing the holopoem’. These lines from Eduardo Kac comprise an observation about cloud movement in different cities: “Clouds race in Chicago. / In Rio the skies are still”. I bring Kac's observation of this phenomenon into my ‘story’: “The clouds raced in

painting it was supposed to be invisible but the painter had to paint it in gold so it could be seen, and as a result, recognize “the holy.” A kind of illusion was being performed. Guest capitalizes on this aspect of the halo’s ‘there / not there-ness’ to empathise its symbolic power:

... it reflects a state of mind, or
a condition that the mind has attained.

The halo has detected the magnetic field into which the energy of the poem is being directed.

(FoI, 28)

She follows on from the above in stating that “Imagination is *clair-obscur*” (FoI, 32). Guest’s expression of her poetics reaches towards what I have termed ‘convergence’ as epitomized in my poems in the final section of *Equinoctial*:

Words of the poem need dimension. They desire finally—an education in space. The poet needs to understand the auditory and spatial needs of a poem to free it so that the poem can locate its own movement, so that it is freed to find its own voice, its own rhythm or accent or power.

(FoI, 30)

In the scheme of this project the words “poem” and “poet”, in the above, could be interchangeable.

To my knowledge, Eduardo Kac did not actually witness noctilucent clouds, but I connect his description of when and where he witnessed clouds either racing or still with that of an artist “taking the pulse’ of his or her creative energy. In this poem, I suggest that I have attained the kind of ‘vision’ that can see “Icarus clouds”, flying close to the sun and reborn as:

aerial
texts tinged with orange and blue, space invaders,
sixty miles high kept on time-lapse
poems you can fly around ...

“Icarus clouds” are precarious but here, not sunk and lost, but reborn as “aerial / texts”. In the myth, Daedalus could not save his son from flying too close to the sun on waxen wings. I have been powerless to save my son from mental distress; it is as though I have never given him any ‘wings’ at all. In writing this poem, borne from anxiety in the early hours and propelled by the project, I am signalling ‘Hope at 4am’. I have collaged Eduardo Kac’s observations of skies and clouds with Barbara Guest’s poetics to create a version of Nicole Brossard’s “aerial / texts” to make texts in this new holographic space “sixty miles high kept on time-lapse, / poems you can fly around ...”, their ‘meanings’ as ungraspable as they might be, in oscillating spaces, before alternating viewings in a gallery.

... words race, shift, re-form as you blink
I have watched metal,
 watched sugar
 and via that pulsed starved electric hunch of intuition
am charged with green

I have the credentials to bear witness, as a woman poet / researcher at the end of her project; to position myself, via the flâneuserie of my feminist reading and writing positions, in claiming territory and agency.

Zone Four: Afterword

4.0 Afterword

“The book is blank, the Preface sets us dreaming.”

(AL, 135)

“... we have never had enough space. And on finding it it’s like convergence; ...”

(AL, 56)

“I like to think of the Letter as that “critical space” where we are learning to see the nature of our desires in slow motion and on fast-forward; in fine detail, and brought together as a whole.”

(AL, 36)

The Preface to *Equinoctial* (Viewing the Holopoem) prepares a reader for ways in which to read ekphrastic poetry which is derived from processes of holography:

Watch metal, watch sugar
no words define
this juncture
though poetry points at it

Nicole Brossard’s statement conveys the idea of a preface as speculative. Her ‘aerial letter’ is a visionary, ‘critical’ space for women’s reading and writing. My Preface is likewise speculative and forward looking. I reference Eduardo Kac’s advice on viewing a holopoem; letters or words will be seen alternately, or together in combinations which are outside any recognizable meaning. This, he says, is “binocular” reading. The poems in my collection represent ways of knowing through holography and are explorations of what that ‘juncture’ might be. The entire structure of *Equinoctial* is underpinned by Kac’s notion of a binocular reading of a holopoem. It begins with that guidance to the reader in the Preface. Such a reading is reinforced by the main headings to the first two sections of the collection, Right Eye (‘The

Ekphrastic Museum’) and Left Eye (‘Through the Hologram’). I intended that the poems in each section should be read and considered alternately as if viewed through either eye; each eye will gain a different perspective. Convergence (when viewing a holopoem) does not bring an easy accommodation of two different views into one unified perspective. The poems in ‘Convergence / Glory Sky-Shell’, the third section of my collection, are evidence of my personal convergent vision which is equally unsettled.

My practice-led PhD in creative writing, not unusually, comprises both creative and critical components: in my case, the collection, *Equinoctial* and accompanying critical / reflective prose, ‘poetics’, derived from my subject areas of Holography, Ekphrasis and Flâneuserie. Much has been written about the relationship between the two components: whether their function should be separate or whether the two should be structurally and conceptually linked. The hologram as a distinctive spatial medium provided a conceptual framework for this research for structuring and linking the creative and critical reflective parts of my thesis. It gave cohesion to the whole and helped me to align the various strands of the project.

Prior to undertaking this research, I was a practising poet as well as an academic. The ongoing creation of new creative work was likely to hold my attention in ways an academic subject might not and I welcomed exposure to new poetics and theoretical literatures; expanding my ‘vision’ of poetry, and the world. My methodology of flâneuserie represents an interrogation of masculine practices in art and literature which exclude women entirely or subjugate them as ‘muses’. Nicole Brossard, Rachel Blau Du-Plessis, Barbara Guest and Griselda Pollock, in particular, facilitated such scrutiny. The latter’s concept of the ‘virtual feminist museum’ as an idealized space for feminist reworking of the masculinist patriarchal biases of the archive prompted my own scrutiny of ‘the museum’ as a gendered space; another

‘gendered space’, I found, was the literary mode of ekphrasis. In this work, I have been both bricoleuse and flâneuse; have crossed subject borders to gather tools and techniques.

I refer to the critical / reflective prose in my thesis as ‘poetics’ as there is a symbiotic relationship between this and the poetry; each feeds into the other. My thesis, as I have explained elsewhere, is divided into Zones rather chapters. My decision to do this was based on the word’s various connections with modernist art and literature and the implications of its meaning as an area which is ‘bounded’. Ideas of being enclosed or ‘bounded’, and the desire to cross such boundaries feature strongly in my work; whether done by myself as poet / researcher in carrying out the research, or, by, main ‘character’, Clair Obscur’s navigations through the poetry. Nicole Brossard’s linking the word ‘zone’ with ‘aerial vision’ particularly served my flâneuserie. The invention of Clair Obscur as The Holographic Flâneuse as the central persona for guiding a reader through the collection allowed me to subvert the conventions of quest literature with its male hero. I configured Clair as my ‘figurehead’ and as my creative ‘other’. Each poem in *Equinoctial* contributes in some way to spatial investigation whether in its form, its position in the collection; whether via the navigation of the Holographic Flâneuse, or in the poems where I have expressed myself more personally. Sometimes the poems function as meta-poems and turn back reflexively on my project as a whole. However, holographic ‘knowing’ is neither declarative, propositional nor functional ‘knowing’, as my Preface suggests. Holographic knowing dwells on the ideas of receiving alternating perspectives of ‘reality’, but, at the same time, in the space between them: an oscillating, energetic space that *only* holography can engender and bestow access.

Just as I have always ‘know’’ the world through literature, and writing, predominately poetry, I have known the world through art. This has been mostly

looking at art (I include all kinds of visual arts) in galleries and online; reading about artists and art-practice; and, on occasion, creating art. The acts of writing poems have been acts of investigating and of knowing; the knowledge that has arisen in the poems is intuitive, experiential, experimental and metaphorical. Ekphrastic poetry is the bringing of art and poetry together as a form of knowledge about the world. I have found that scholarly writing about ekphrasis broadly propagates a gendered view of the relationship between the art forms which denotes art as feminine ('stilled' in space) and poetry as masculine ('active' in time). 'Knowing' in ekphrastic poetry is the attempted reconciliation between the 'stilled' and 'active'. Wolfgang Iser provided the first way into the 'virtual text'; one that existed cognitively between reader and actual text. Holography, in the form of holopoetry, provides a development of the idea of the reader 'constructing' the text. Holographic space is not a still space; investigating it depends on the motion of the perceiver. The poetry is conceived of as being kinetic. I intend the reader to gain a sense of moving through the poetry and not in occupying the poems as still space. I bring properties of holography, or holopoetry, to be precise, to new poetry that celebrate transformation, oscillation, the spatiotemporal.

I have referred to my interactions with 'the holographic' as ekphrastic 'dialogues' implying that these interactions are prospective and ongoing. I define such dialogues as "immersive": Eduardo Kac has said that a holopoem can only be made by being *immersed* in the medium of holography, not 'written' beforehand and then made into a holopoem later. My poetry arises from an *immersion* in writings about processes of holography (whether literally, ideologically or both) and its products, as artwork. Retrospectively I can see that my concerns have a longer provenance in previous ekphrastic poetry; by being curious about the visual and acts of looking, and finding different ways of representing this in language. My original

contribution to knowledge is my investigation of holography as a new context for ekphrastic poetry. I have construed 'holographic enquiry' as a form of 'ekphrastic enquiry'. As have mentioned above, I wanted to communicate to the reader what, both Eduardo Kac and Nicole Brossard have articulated, in relation to holopoetry and to the 'aerial letter', as 'turbulent presence'.

In my research I only ever found one poem written in dialogue with a hologram. Even though there may be more individual poets who have responded to holograms in their poetry, no scholarship refers to holograms as visual art. Feminist criticism has filled this gap to some degree in accessing a 'third dimension': Nicole Brossard uses tropes of hologram and 'aerial letter' to signify a liberatory space for women's creative practice; Griselda Pollock writes of the "virtual feminist museum" which is a space of speculative possibility to counter gendered art practices. Holography has allowed me to continue to think through spaces posited by Brossard and Pollock. Through the trajectory of the collection *Clair Obscur* breaks away from practices in modernist art and literature that occlude or render women invisible to find the Green Apartment, an energised transformational and meditative space for women writers and artists, a 21st century equivalent of Virginia Woolf's 'A Room of One's Own'. The Green Apartment is a place 'beyond the frame' ('frame' as gender prison) as I have discussed, for instance in relation to the trappings of 'musehood' in surrealism; also in art where 'trompe d'oeil' techniques appear to offer 'embodiment' but which, in fact, privilege feminine 'stillness' and passivity.

Holography was a means by which Eduardo Kac could reach 'beyond the frame' to invent holopoetry and, in doing so, take poetry into another dimension. I have seized upon holography to investigate the gender implications of moving beyond the frame and the poetry in *Equinoctial* represents my holographic knowing. It is

knowledge which is intuitive and utopian derived from perceiving (rather than just ‘thinking’) from different perspectives, and remaining shifting and unfixed.

I only ever viewed one actual holopoem; as a consequence, I relied on images of holopoems found on Eduardo Kac’s web-site for writing my own poems. The holopoems were reproduced in numbered editions; and are in galleries abroad, or in collections in the UK, private, university-based or the artist’s own. It is ironic that an art-form that sought to break out of the frame can only be viewed in these limited museum spaces and under specialized viewing conditions. This reinforces a view that bringing holopoems (and their theory) back to the page improves access to them, something that Eduardo Kac originally intended.

My work could be criticised for my over-stressing of the concerns of ‘woman’ poets and, in so doing, so rendering them ‘other’ when my whole thesis works *against* that practice. I connect Barbara Guest’s work, for instance, with feminist holographic reading and writing practices in my research. Guest did not refer to herself a feminist. However, Guest was certainly marginalized as part of the New York poetry and art scene and was not included in the first New York poetry anthology. Guest’s poetry is extraordinary and it is only in the last decade that she has received due critical attention. Her diverse configurations of language on the page draw attention to discourses of both text and image as do her concerns within the poems. Her poems and essays on poetry and arts comprise a poetics that underpinned my own and the invention of Clair Obscur. For these reasons, I have included her in my flâneuserie.

The process of doing this practice-led thesis has enlarged my ways of working as a practitioner and an academic; a hologram, as light waves on a holographic plate, represents vastness contained in a small space. As a poet and researcher I know that the smallest part can represent the whole, and the whole, can be broken down and looked at from multiple perspectives. In recognizing this I am recognizing a major

feature of the technical side of holography. Rather than adopt one theoretical approach in this research, pre-eminent is the hybrid discourse of ‘poetics’ which blends critical and creative practice. My poetics has been assimilated from the various disciplines in this study. I began investigating holography as a source for ekphrasis in writing the poem, ‘Hologram’ which I include at the start of the project; in giving the same name to a pamphlet and writing in response to the 3D image of David Bowie Martin Richardson provided for its front cover. Further contemplation of (and wonder at) the properties of holograms and reading poems prompted my research question about what holography might yield for *writing* them. I approached Martin Richardson as a colleague and asked him if he could provide a hologram for limited editions of my pamphlet of the same name. My poem in dialogue with Richardson’s 3D image of Bowie was included in a sequence of ekphrastic interventions with Bowie’s changing images that allowed me to speculate on ‘self’ in gender in my poems. Working with Martin Richardson took me to Greenwich, and to his holograms of John Harrison’s timekeeper. Greenwich subsequently became the main site of my flâneuserie; for reflections on the intersections of time and space and for my reclamation of the figurehead as flâneuse.

The scholarship of ‘flâneuserie’ (as I find, and interpret it) has not yet embraced holography; a logical next step would be to investigate even more what kind of space this yield for writing and thinking about art; about the gendered nature of urban space. To reiterate, undertaking this practice-led project has allowed me to make epistemological claims for poetry as a kind of knowledge that arises from perception; that is oscillatory rather fixed. In ontological terms, it allows me to speculate on being and becoming as feminist poet / researcher via ‘selves’ rather than in forcing positionality from one fixed perspectives. The hologram allows for multiple perspectives and the embracing of the ungraspable. Nicole Brossard and Eduardo Kac

responded with their art to forge new and alternative visions to challenge what was static and restricting in the political landscape of the 1980s. As I write this in the UK summer of 2016, with its climate of political disarray, fear of terrorism, reported increase in incidents of racism and evidence of rife misogyny on social media and elsewhere, the title of one of the songs on David Bowie's 2013 album *The Next Day* is a question. "Where are we now?". It is a good question to ask about poetry. As far as this project goes, my answer is "immersed, via flâneuserie, in speculative holopoetics."

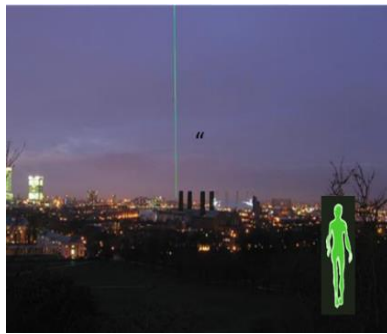


Figure 18. Clair Obscur and Greenwich³⁶¹

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³⁶¹ Image by Pam Thompson.

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